TRADITIONAL JAPANESE LITERATURE

An Anthology, Beginnings to 1600

EDITED BY

Haruo Shirane

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Traditional Japanese Literature: An Anthology, Beginnings to 1600, is the companion volume to *Early Modern Japanese Literature: An Anthology, 1600–1900* (Columbia University Press, 2002). The project began as a one-volume edition of traditional Japanese literature, but as I gradually realized that a more comprehensive and detailed perspective on pre-twentieth-century Japanese literature and culture was needed, for both pedagogical reasons and the growth of the field, the project ballooned into a multivolume anthology.

Like the *Early Modern* volume, this one was organized and written with several objectives. First was the need to select representative texts and subtexts to present a broader and more complex view of Japanese literature without sacrificing the familiar texts, which here have been given new contexts. Throughout the book, in the introductions to each text, in the special introductions to genres and periods, and in the notes and commentaries, I have provided sociohistorical, religious, cultural, and literary contexts. Although I believe that literature is best understood as a part of a larger genre, with specific conventions and expectations, I also note other factors important to understanding the many functions that these texts have served over time. For example, classical poetry (*waka*), which was the mainstay of traditional Japanese literature, is highly intertextual, relying on well-known tropes and pretexts. Accordingly, these poems often make little sense without commentary, which this anthology offers in abundance. Some texts, such as *The Tale of Genji* and *The*

เนื้อหาคุ้มครองลิขสิทธิ์

Tales of the Heike, have the unusual ability to transcend their historical context, joining the pantheon of world literature, but these are the exception to the rule.

Most of the texts here have been translated for the first time, and many of the familiar texts have been retranslated specifically for this anthology. I strongly believe in the need for multiple translators, who can bring different voices to the texts. The quality and accuracy of the translations, the notes, and commentary are, of course, my responsibility, and unless otherwise noted, the introductions and commentary were written by me.

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เนื้อหาคุ้มครองลิขสิทธิ์

HISTORICAL PERIODS, MAJOR TEXTS AND AUTHORS, AND TERMS

HISTORICAL PERIODS

Ancient (to 784)

Jōmon	10,000–300 B.C.E.
Yayoi	300 B.C.E.–300 C.E.
Tomb	300–552
Asuka	552–710
Jinshin war	672
Nara	710–784

Heian (794–1185)

Heian	794–1185

Medieval (1185–1600)

Kamakura	1183–1333
Fall of the Heike	1185
Jōkyū rebellion	1221
Kenmu restoration	1333–1336

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Northern and Southern Courts (Nanboku-chō)	1336–1392
Muromachi	1392–1573
Ōnin war	1467–1477
Warring States (Sengoku)	1467–1573
Azuchi–Momoyama	1573–1598
Battle of Sekigahara	1600

Early Modern and Modern (1600–Present)

Edo (Tokugawa)	1600–1867
Meiji	1868–1912

KEY TERMS AND GENRES

Japanese	*English*
chōka	long poem
engi-mono	story of temple-shrine origins
fudoki	provincial gazetteer
gunki-mono	warrior tale
haikai	popular linked verse
hōgo	vernacular Buddhist literature
imayō	modern-style song
jōruri	puppet theater
kagami-mono	vernacular history (mirror piece)
kanbun	Chinese prose (written by Japanese)
kangaku	Chinese studies
kanshi	Chinese poetry (written by Japanese)
katari-mono	orally recited narrative
kayō	song
kikōbun	travel literature
kodai kayō	ancient song
kouta	little song
kyōgen	comic theater
monogatari	vernacular tale
nō	nō drama
norito	prayer to the gods
otogi-zōshi	Muromachi tale
renga	classical linked verse
sarugaku	comic mime and skits
sekkyōbushi	sermon ballad
setsuwa	anecdote
tanka	short poem (thirty-one syllables), same as *waka*
uta-awase	poetry match

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uta-monogatari	poem tale
utamakura	place with poetic associations
waka	classical poem (thirty-one syllables)
wasan	Buddhist hymns in Japanese
zuihitsu	essay, pensée, miscellany

RANKS, TITLES, AND OFFICES

Japanese	*English*
sesshō	regent
kanpaku	regent (for adult emperor)
daijō daijin	prime minister
sadaijin	minister of the left
udaijin	minister of the right
naidaijin	palace minister
daijōkan	council of state
naka no kanpaku	middle regent
nyōgo	high imperial consort
kōi	lesser imperial consort
chūgū	empress
dainagon	senior counselor
chūnagon	middle counselor
shōnagon	junior counselor
sangi	consultant
taishō (*daishō*)	major captain
chūjō	middle captain
shōshō	lesser captain
kami	governor
kugyō	senior noble
tenjōbito	courtier (literally, "hall person")
daiben	major controller
chūben	middle controller
shōben	lesser controller
jige	gentlemen of low rank
zuryō	provincial governor

JAPANESE NAMES AND JAPANESE PRONUNCIATION

All Japanese names are given in the normal Japanese order, surname first. Up through the Kamakura period, the surname and the first name often were linked by the attributive particle *no*, as in Fujiwara *no* Shunzei. Fujiwara is the surname and Shunzei the given name. In addition, premodern writers are often

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referred to by their given name. Thus, one would say "a poem by Shunzei." Each syllable in Japanese is distinct, with no accent, and each vowel sounds similar to that in Italian. Vowels with macrons (long mark) over them are held twice as long as the unmarked vowels.

ABBREVIATIONS OF MODERN SERIAL EDITIONS

CZS	*Chūsei zenke no shisō*, vol. 16 of *Nihon shisō taikei* (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1972)
KNKB	*Kanshō Nihon koten bungaku*, 35 vols. (Tokyo: Kadokawa shoten, 1977–1978)
NKBT	*Nihon koten bungaku taikei*, 102 vols. (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1957–1968)
NKBZ	*Nihon koten bungaku zenshū*, 60 vols. (Tokyo: Shōgakukan, 1970–1976)
SNKBT	*Shin Nihon koten bungaku taikei* (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1989–)
SNKBZ	*Shin Nihon koten bungaku zenshū* (Tokyo: Shōgakukan, 1994–)
SNKS	*Shin Nihon koten shūsei*, 79 vols. (Tokyo: Shinchōsha, 1976–1989)

Citations are followed by an abbreviation of the series title, the volume number, and the page. For example, NKBZ 51:525 refers to page 525 of volume 51 of *Nihon koten bungaku zenshū*.

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Traditional Japanese Literature

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Provinces of Japan from the eighth century. (The provinces were established in the late seventh and eighth centuries, and it now is standard practice to use retrospectively the same names for the regions that they later represented.)

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INTRODUCTION

In this anthology, each chapter or period (Ancient, Heian, Kamakura, Northern and Southern Courts, and Muromachi) begins with a brief historical overview of the major political, social, and economic changes, followed by shorter introductions to authors and genres, and then brief introductions to specific texts. Whenever possible, the texts are grouped by genre. But because some of the genres (such as *waka*, *monogatari*, *setsuwa*, and warrior tales) span many centuries, they are arranged not by genre but chronologically, across various periods. Readers are thus urged to read by both genre and period. The following introduction highlights some of the recurrent issues spanning these different historical periods and genres.

LANGUAGE AND WRITING

The oldest extant literary and historical texts in Japan date back to the beginning of the eighth century. The *Kojiki* (*Record of Ancient Matters*, 712) and *Nihon shoki* (*Chronicles of Japan*, 720) were written in order to legitimize the new state order by providing an account of how the world came into being and by tracing the origins of the emperor to the age of the gods. Anthologies of Japanese poetry began to be compiled in the late seventh century, and the *Man'yōshū* (*Collection of Myriad Leaves*), an encyclopedic collection of poetry, was compiled throughout the eighth century. Although a long tradition of songs existed

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before the *Man'yōshū*, it was only after the Chinese system of graphs was imported and adapted to record Japanese words that written literature came into being. In fact, Chinese became the official language of government and religion, and the most esteemed literary genres in the eight century were, as in China, histories, religious-philosophical writings, and poetry. Whereas the *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki* are written almost entirely in Chinese, the *Man'yōshū* uses Chinese graphs phonetically to record poetry composed in Japanese. With the notable exception of folk songs adapted in the *Man'yōshū*, the literature of the early period was written by the nobility, particularly those close to the emperor and the imperial court, which held the reins of power through both the Nara and the Heian periods.

A major turning point in the history of Japanese literature came in the late ninth century with the emergence of *kana*, the native phonetic syllabary, which led to the first great flowering of vernacular literature, including the *Kokinshū* (*Collection of Ancient and Modern Poems*, ca. 905); *The Tales of Ise*; *Kagerō Diary* by the Mother of Michitsuna; Sei Shōnagon's *Pillow Book*; Murasaki Shikibu's *The Tale of Genji*; and *Sarashina Diary* by the Daughter of Takasue. The high quality of this vernacular literature, much of it by women writers of the middle level of the aristocracy, was one reason why this period was later (in the medieval period) canonized as the "classical period," becoming the linguistic model for written Japanese for the next thousand years.

The main element of literary continuity between the ancient period and the Heian period is Japanese poetry, the thirty-one-syllable *waka* or *uta*, which was composed extensively in the seventh and eighth centuries and became even more important in the tenth and eleventh centuries. Indeed, in Heian aristocratic society it was impossible to function, in either public or private, without the ability to compose waka. Furthermore, a significant number of literary diaries (*nikki*) and poem tales (*uta monogatari*) in the Heian period grew out of private collections of poems that had been exchanged between the author and his or her acquaintances. The *Kana* Preface to the *Kokinshū*, the first imperial collection of waka, reminds its readers that giving voice to one's feelings through poetry is an inevitable response to experiences of seasonal changes and human events. Much of the kana literature by women, which blossomed in the mid-Heian period, is highly lyrical, with stress on emotions and private thoughts, often encapsulated in the waka that emerge at climactic moments in the narrative. *The Tale of Genji*, with more than eight hundred poems, is a good example of this phenomenon.

POWER AND COURTSHIP

From its beginning at the imperial court, Japanese poetry, which became the central genre in the premodern period, had both a public, political role, often in the ritual affirmation of power, and a private, social role, as an intimate form

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of dialogue and the primary vehicle for courtship between the sexes. Although most of the poems in the *Kokinshū* were drawn from private exchanges and collections, the anthology was commissioned by the emperor and served as a whole to enhance the cultural authority and aura of the throne. The private, dialogic function of poetry, which resulted in the Heian literary diaries, should thus be distinguished from its ritualistic, public functions in the form of anthologies.

The early chronicles, such as the *Nihon shoki* and *Kojiki*, which were commissioned by the Yamato court in the early eighth century at a critical period in nation-state building, and the first two volumes of the *Man'yōshū* affirmed the power and authority of the head of the Yamato clan, which became the imperial household. By contrast, the vernacular *monogatari* in the tenth and eleventh centuries represent alternative voices, of those left out of power. The function of literary culture in the Heian period, particularly after the tenth and eleventh centuries, is very different from that of the ancient period. The center of political power had shifted from sovereigns to regents, from the throne to commoner clans (primarily the Fujiwara), who controlled the throne through marital politics. In the sixth and seventh centuries, the emperor ruled directly and administered through the *daijōkan* (state ministries), but starting in the Heian period, a division gradually formed between the imperial palace and the state ministries. New power also devolved to the provincial governors, over whom the state ministries had increasingly less control.

The Heian vernacular monogatari came from the hands of the provincial governor class (who had economic stability but were one step removed from the upper echelons of power) and, as a consequence, is a much more private genre than the early chronicles and court poetry (such as Hitomaro's *chōka*, or long poems) found in the first two volumes of the *Man'yōshū*. The Heian monogatari continued to deal with the nobility and the emperor, and in that sense they maintained the aristocratic, court culture of the Nara period. But in contrast to the *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki* and the early volumes of the *Man'yōshū*, which enforce the authority, power, and divinity of the sovereign and his or her surrogates, the protagonists of the monogatari violate the sociopolitical order and relativize the authority of the throne. The protagonists of *The Tales of Ise* and *The Tale of Genji* belong to clans (the Ariwara and the Genji) that were ousted. Instead of affirming the dominant clan (the northern branch of the Fujiwara), *The Tales of Ise*, for example, reveals deep sympathy for those (such as the clan of Ariwara Narihira, the protagonist) who have been defeated by or fallen into the shadow of the Fujiwara.

One consequence of being at a slight remove from the center of power is that the Heian monogatari offer an alternative voice. *The Tale of Genji*, for example, glorifies court culture and the position of the emperor who stood at its center, harking back to a time, a century earlier, when the sovereign had direct power, as opposed to the regency system, in which the emperor was a

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puppet of his Fujiwara relatives. At the same time, however, *The Tale of Genji*, which depicts an illegitimate son on the throne, seriously undermines the myth of direct and unbroken descent from the gods that became so important in later, twentieth-century pre–World War II discourse. The sympathy for the political losers and the expression of alternative voices are a major feature of the monogatari genre and continue into the medieval period with, for example, *The Tales of the Heike*, a warrior tale that portrays the fall of the house of the Heike (Taira), and the *Clear Mirror* (*Masukagami*), one of the four historical "mirrors" or chronicles of political leaders, which looks back nostalgically to the exiled emperors GoToba and GoDaigo at a time when the imperial court was on the verge of extinction. Other monogatari and historical chronicles, however, glorify those who achieved power. *A Tale of Flowering Fortunes* (*Eiga monogatari*) and *The Great Mirror* (*Ōkagami*), both written in the late Heian period, portray the life and political rise of Fujiwara no Michinaga, the most powerful regent in the Heian period.

LOSS AND INTEGRATION

Cultural forms and rituals provide a general model for social behavior, one that also takes into account possible threats and dangers. The evil-stepmother tale, which was the fundamental paradigm of the monogatari in the tenth century, is one such model of loss and reintegration. The oppressive evil stepmother represents a trial that the unprotected stepdaughter must endure and overcome if she is to become an adult member of the community. The heroine overcomes this threat, the evil characters are punished and driven out, and the cultural norms and values are articulated and reinforced. The exile of the young noble, another familiar plot pattern in both early-Nara-period myths and the Heian monogatari, is the male version of the evil-stepmother tale. A young god or aristocrat who has committed a transgression or sin undergoes a severe trial in a distant and hostile land. In the process, the young man proves his mettle, meets a woman, and acquires the power necessary to become a leader and hero. A good example is the myth of "The Luck of the Sea and the Luck of the Mountain," one of the key stories in the eighth-century *Kojiki*. In *The Tale of Genji*, the hero likewise commits a sin (having a secret son by Fujitsubo, the consort of his father, the emperor). He is exiled to Suma, where he meets a woman who eventually bears his only daughter, a key to his subsequent political success. The exile thereby functions as a means of atonement and a ritualistic coming of age.

LOVE AND EROTICISM

The central topoi of classical Japanese poetry were love (*koi*) and the four seasons, and one of the central topics of premodern vernacular literature is love

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and male–female relations. Monogatari, which often center on the exchange of love poetry, can be seen as an expression of desires, which are often forbidden and thwarted, and a means of temporary wish fulfillment. The amorous hero initially drives the monogatari, moving it from one pursuit to the other, in a string of potentially unending episodes. This does not mean that the protagonist necessarily fulfills his desire. To the contrary, it is the mark of the Heian monogatari (as exemplified by *Ise monogatari* and *Genji monogatari*) that the amorous hero is perpetually frustrated and unhappy. As the topic of love in the *Kokinshū* reminds us, love as a poetic topos is almost never about fulfillment; instead, it is about disappointment, frustration, regret, and other negative emotions. Likewise, the interest of the monogatari is usually not in the eroticism, in the expression and release of physical desire, so much as in the failure of both the male protagonist and the woman.

Certain types of literature express the desire that results from the sacrifices caused by the pressures to conform to the dominant culture or social institutions. This kind of literature operates in two ways: it expresses or manifests that desire, and it expels or releases such desire in a controlled manner. Literature or cultural processes of this type fulfill both functions at once, since desire can be expelled through having been revealed and described and thus vicariously experienced by author and reader. By describing such desire, the monogatari releases it at the same time through a protagonist who is typically an amorous hero punished for his erotic transgression. Thus Genji is exiled to Suma where his sins are washed away. In short, the monogatari provides a socially sanctioned means of both releasing and controlling forbidden desire.

SOCIALITY

One of the primary functions of culture is the cultivation of "sociality," the capacity for complex social behavior. Sociality is marked by the ability to be mutually responsive, to read the minds of others, and to be able to understand such notions as politeness and rudeness. Sociality includes knowing how to greet, part, and attend to the "face" of the other. Sociality of this type assumes that the community finds it valuable to invest time and energy not only in mastering the basic social rules but also in appreciating innovative variations and changes, which require judgment and imagination and distinguish between the novice and the sophisticate. Heian aristocratic vernacular texts frequently had this role of developing, embodying, and transmitting sociality. At the lower social end, one of the obvious purposes of anecdotal collections such as the *Tales of Times Now Past* (*Konjaku monogatari shū*) was to teach commoners how to behave, what to do (act filial, pay respect to Buddhist priests, and so on), and what not to do (not steal, lie, murder, and so on) by revealing the consequences of certain actions. More sophisticated examples are *The Pillow Book* (*Makura no sōshi*) and *The Tale of Genji* (*Genji monogatari*), which are

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concerned with sociality at the highest levels of aristocratic society. Much of *The Pillow Book* is concerned with aesthetics, not as some objective standard of beauty, but as part of sociality, as the fine appreciation of the nuances of social response and interaction. The same is true in the first part of *The Tale of Genji*, in which superior social ability becomes an admired quality of the hero and heroines. The humor often derives from those characters (such as Suetsumuhana, the red-nosed lady) who unwittingly fail to understand those complex rules of behavior.

Literary texts explore the complex nature of sociality and offer a wider range of possibilities and perspectives than could normally be experienced firsthand. This particular cultural function can be found in a range of Heian genres, from vernacular literary diaries (such as *Tosa Diary*, *Kagerō Diary*, and *Sarashina Diary*) to poem tales (such as *The Tales of Ise*), which often focus on the ability to compose waka, one of the key aspects of aristocratic sociality. Some of the women's diaries may in fact have been written for the authors' daughters as a way of showing them how to both survive and function properly in society. (To judge these texts solely on modern "literary" grounds—according to modern standards of structural unity, plot, and character development or for their mimetic or expressive qualities—would thus miss one of their main cultural functions.)

CONDENSATION AND INTERTEXTUALITY

Many traditional Japanese literary and aesthetic forms, particularly those that stress brevity, condensation, and overtones, assume an intimate audience. The paring down of form and expression occurs in a wide variety of forms: poetry, nō drama, landscape gardening, bonsai, tea ceremony, and ink painting, to mention only the most obvious. Historically, Japanese poetry evolved from the *chōka* (literally, "long poem"), which is found in the early *Man'yōshū*; to the thirty-one-syllable waka, the central form of the *Kokinshū* and the Heian period; to linked verse in the medieval period; and, finally, in the Tokugawa (or Edo) period, to the seventeen-syllable *hokku*, later called *haiku*, probably the shortest poetic form in world literature.

A similar condensation of form can be found in nō drama. As it evolved under Zeami (1363?–1443?), the greatest nō playwright, nō was a drama of elegance, restraint, and suggestion. Human actions were reduced to the bare essentials, to highly symbolic movements such as tilting the mask to express joy or sweeping the hand to represent weeping. In *A Mirror Held to the Flower* (*Kakyō*), Zeami writes that "if what the actor feels in the heart is ten, what appears in movement should be seven." He stresses that the point at which physical movement becomes minute and then finally stops is the point of greatest intensity. The physical and visual restrictions—the fixed mask, the slow body movement, the almost complete absence of props or scenery—

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create a drama that must occur as much in the mind of the audience as on the stage.

In *Essays in Idleness* (*Tsurezuregusa*, 1329–1333), often considered the ultimate compendium of Heian court aesthetics, the aristocrat-priest Kenkō argues that what is not stated, cannot be seen by the eyes, and is incomplete in expression is more moving, alluring, and memorable than what is directly presented. Since ancient times, the Japanese have prized the social capacity for indirection and suggestion. Poetry was recognized for its overtones, connotations, and subtle allegory and metaphor rather than for what it actually stated. In large part, this particular literary and social mode depends on a close bond between the composer and reader, with their common body of cultural knowledge, which was absorbed through literary texts.

ATTACHMENT AND DETACHMENT

The three primary ideological centers in the premodern period were Buddhism, Confucianism, and native beliefs that were later called Shinto. Buddhism and Confucianism were imported from the continent in the ancient period. Buddhism stressed issues of individual salvation, suffering, and protection from various dangers. Confucianism became the guide for ethical behavior and social and political relations, based largely on the model of the family and filial piety. Finally, the local folk beliefs focused on fertility, nature, ancestral worship, purification, and pollution. Dramatic conflict in Japanese literary texts often derives from the interaction among these different ideologies. Much of Japanese literature from the Nara through the medieval era stands in a larger Buddhist context that regards excessive attachments—especially family bonds and the deep emotions of love—as a serious deterrent to individual salvation, particularly in a world in which all things are viewed as impermanent. Each individual is bound to a cycle of life and death, to a world of suffering and illusory attachment, until he or she achieves salvation.

By the mid-Heian period, the Japanese believed that strong attachments, particularly at the point of death, would impede the soul's progress to the next world, which, it was hoped, would be the Pure Land, or Western Paradise. In a typical nō play by Zeami, the protagonist is caught in one of the lower realms—often as a wandering ghost or a person suffering in hell—as a result of some deep attachment or resentment. For the warrior, the attachment is often the bitterness or ignominy of defeat; for women, jealousy or the failure of love; and for old men, the impotence of age. In Zeami's "dream plays," such as the warrior play *Atsumori*, in which the protagonist appears in the dream of the traveling monk (the *waki*), the protagonist cathartically reenacts or recounts the source of his attachment to the dreaming priest, who offers prayers for his salvation and spiritual release.

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Except for didactic literature composed by Buddhist priests, Heian vernacular fiction and women's diaries such as *The Tale of Genji* and *Sarashina Diary* usually take a highly ambivalent view of Buddhist ideals, focusing on the difficulty of attaining detachment in a world of passion and natural beauty. Indeed, at the heart of Japanese aristocratic literature, particularly from the mid-Heian period onward, lies the conflict between Buddhistic aspirations of selflessness (which eventually merged with samurai ideals in the medieval period) and the sensual, aesthetic, and emotional orientation of early native beliefs. In *An Account of a Ten-Foot-Square Hut* (*Hōjōki*, thirteenth century), the waka poet Kamo no Chōmei, confronted with the world of suffering and impermanence—natural disasters, famine, the destruction of the capital—retreats to a small hut outside the capital. In the process of preparing for rebirth in the Pure Land, however, he becomes attached to the tranquillity and pleasures of his rustic retreat and thereupon fears that his attachment to nature and to writing will hinder his salvation.

Conflict tends to be internalized in Japanese vernacular literature, often creating a highly psychological or lyrical work. In Zeami's nō dramas, for example, the characters usually have no substantial external conflict. Instead, the climax occurs when the protagonist is freed of his or her internal attachment or is reconciled to himself or herself, not when the opposition, if there is any, is vanquished. When the influence of Buddhism abated in the Tokugawa period (a secular age of urban growth, capitalism, and commerce, dominated by urban commoners), more secular plot paradigms became prominent, such as the conflict between human desire or love (*ninjō*) and social duty or obligation (*giri*), which lies at the heart of Chikamatsu Mon'zaemon's puppet plays (*jōruri*). Even so, the ultimate focus of the literature and drama tends to be on the intense emotions, generated by or in conflict with the irreconcilable pressures of society and social responsibility (supported by Confucian ethics). Although dramatic conflict exists, the primary objective of drama is not always the pursuit and development of dramatic conflict to its logical consequences.

Although sometimes possessing elaborate and complex plot structures, vernacular prose fiction often is concerned with the elaboration of a particular mood or emotion and tends to be fragmentary and episodic. For example, in vernacular fiction, the poetic diary, and drama (nō, jōruri), it is no accident that one of the most popular scenes is the parting: a poetic topos that can be traced back to the poetry of the *Man'yōshū*. *The Tale of Genji* is highlighted by a series of partings, which culminate in the climactic parting: the death of the heroine. The same can be said of *The Tales of the Heike*, a complex and detailed military epic that repeatedly focuses on the terrible partings that war forces on human beings. The closeness of traditional social ties—between parent and child, lord and retainer, husband and wife, individual and group—make the parting an emotionally explosive situation, which is often presented in highly poetic language.

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PERFORMANCE AND NARRATION

The primary vernacular genres in the Heian period were the thirty-one-syllable poem (*waka*) and related forms, particularly poetic diaries (*nikki*) and vernacular tales (*monogatari*). The poetic orientation of Heian vernacular literature, however, should not obscure the fact that Japanese vernacular literature also was rooted in a narrative tradition that often imported texts from the continent and was presented orally to the audience. This narrative, storytelling literature, which came to fore in the late Heian and medieval periods when commoner culture began to surface, included a wide assortment of myths, legends, anecdotes (*setsuwa*), and folktales, often about strange, supernatural, or divine events. This narrative tradition, which drew on anecdotes from China and India, became particularly prominent in the late Heian period, when Buddhist priests used for didactic purposes popular stories that they recorded and rewrote to preach to a largely illiterate audience. The *Konjaku monogatari shū*, which was compiled in the late Heian period, is the most famous example of a collection of such anecdotes. This storytelling tradition also appears in the form of extended epic-like narratives like *The Tales of the Heike*, composed around the thirteenth or fourteenth century, which was memorized and chanted to the accompaniment of the *biwa* (lute) by blind minstrel-priests.

One major consequence of this narrative, storytelling tradition is that Japanese vernacular fiction tends to have a strong narrational voice: a narrator(s) describes and comments on the action from a subjective point of view. The conventions of oral storytelling are evident in almost all Japanese prose fiction, including highly sophisticated, stream-of-consciousness narratives like *The Tale of Genji*. In narrational genres like *The Tales of the Heike*, nō drama, and *sekkyō-bushi* (sermon ballads), this type of narrational voice flows over the action, dialogue, and scenery. First- and third-person narrations overlap. In nō, for example, the dialogue alternates with descriptive passages narrated by both the chorus and the protagonist. The position of the narrator is most prominent in jōruri, in which the chanter (*gidayū*), on a dais separate from the puppet stage, performs both the puppet dialogue and the narration.

This double structure—action enveloped in descriptive narration—lends itself to extremely powerful lyric tragedy, in which the tone is elegant, poetic, and uplifting even when the subject matter or situation is unpleasant and sorrowful. The love suicide plays by Chikamatsu, the greatest jōruri playwright, are one example. The climactic travel scene (*michiyuki*)—a subcategory of the parting topos—is one of tragedy and pathos: the lovers, who are traveling to the place of their death, have resolved to be united in death rather than live under their present circumstances. The overriding narration is chanted to music and interwoven with allusions to poetic places and classical poetry. The narration consequently elevates the character even as he or she dies. The same can be said of climactic scenes in *The Tale of Genji* or in the final chapter of *The Tales*

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of the Heike, when Kenreimon'in reflects on the destruction of her clan. In most of these scenes, the poetic descriptions of nature and seasons, so central to Japanese poetry, suggest that death is not an end but a return to nature.

The lyrical character of Japanese vernacular literature also derives from a fusion of genres and media that in European literature are generally thought of as being intrinsically separate. Except for some folk literature (*setsuwa*), it is hard to find a work of premodern Japanese prose literature that does not include poetry. Since the Renaissance, European theater has generally been split into three basic forms—drama, opera, and ballet—whereas traditional Japanese theater has combined these elements (acting, music, and dance) in each of the major dramatic forms: nō drama, *kyōgen* (comic drama), jōruri (puppet theater), and kabuki. Of these, only kyōgen does not depend on music. One of the central principles of nō and jōruri is the *jo/ha/kyū* (introduction, development, and finale), which regulates the tempo of the play, particularly in relationship to dance and song. This multimedia quality often makes the drama more performative than mimetic; instead of emphasizing the represented world, the work calls attention to itself as a performative medium.

ACCRECTIONARY GENRES AND THE HOUSE SYSTEM

The history of Japanese literary genres tends to be accretionary. Every major historical era gave birth to new genres, but usually without destroying or abandoning the earlier forms. The thirty-one-syllable waka emerged in the Nara and Heian periods, linked verse in the medieval period, the seventeen-syllable hokku (later called haiku) in the Tokugawa period, and free verse in the modern period (under the influence of Western poetry). With the exception of linked verse, all these poetic genres continue to flourish in Japan. The same is true of Japanese drama. Nō and its comic counterpart, kyōgen, emerged in the Muromachi period; jōruri (puppet theater) and kabuki were dominant in the Tokugawa period; and modern theater (*shingeki*) came to the fore in the twentieth century. Instead of each new form displacing the previous one, these dramatic forms continue to coexist even today.

Much of this remarkable continuity in poetry and drama as well as in the other traditional arts (such as tea ceremony and flower arrangement) can be attributed to the school or house system, with a family structure (a house head, single-line inheritance) resulting in a "living" tradition. Haiku and *tanka* (modern *waka*) remain popular, estimated at around a million practitioners, because of the accessibility and popularity of the short form and because this institutional dimension fulfills important social and psychological needs. In the European tradition, this relationship between the poet and his or her predecessors was characterized by Harold Bloom in psychoanalytical (Freudian) terms, as an Oedipal struggle in which the poet attempts to slay the father

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so that he may himself become a father. In Japan, there may be a violent struggle between schools, but the relationship of the poet to his or her predecessors is usually highly filial, with the son's identity closely linked to or dependent on that of the "father," whether it be the founder of the school or the immediate master.

JAPANESE LITERATURE AND NATIONAL IDENTITY

Japanese literature can be defined in a number of different ways. First, it can mean literature written in the "Japanese" language, usually in the writing system based on kana (*hiragana* and *katakana*), the vernacular syllabary developed in the ancient period and in fairly common use by the ninth century. (Such writing also includes writing in Japanese by Koreans or Taiwanese during the long period of Japanese occupation in the twentieth century or even by Japanese immigrants to the United States or Brazil writing in Japanese.) "Japanese literature" also can mean literature written by Japanese people, those who live on the archipelago now referred to as Japan. This form of "Japanese literature" covers writing in Chinese, which constituted the mainstay of literary, religious, and political writing in Japan for most of the premodern and early modern periods. (It also refers to writings in the Ainu or Ryūkyū languages.) One of the major characteristics of Japanese culture is that for most of its written history, it has constantly used two languages—Japanese and Chinese—with Chinese constantly influencing the native vernacular.

This second notion of Japanese literature, literature written by Japanese, which prevailed through most of the premodern period, directly contradicts the first definition, literature in vernacular Japanese, which has dominated the modern period. Japanese literature as a national literature (*kokubungaku*) based on a national language (*kokugo*) that precluded the use of languages other than Japanese emerged as part of modern nation-state building in the Meiji period (1868–1912), particularly after the Sino-Japanese War (1894–1895), in which China was defeated by Japan and lost its preeminent place as the center of cultural authority. The present canon of Japanese literature, which largely eliminates writings in Chinese, was the result of this modern notion of Japanese literature as literature written by Japanese in Japanese and was driven largely by notions of national identity and national character.[1] These issues of national identity and national character eliminated heavily Chinese texts. Today, the Genroku period (1688–1704), a period of cultural renaissance at the end of the

1. For more on the construction of "Japanese literature," see Haruo Shirane and Tomi Suzuki, eds., *Inventing the Classics: Modernity, National Identity, and Japanese Literature* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2000).

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seventeenth century, is best known for the poetry, prose fiction, and drama of Matsuo Bashō (1644–1694), Ihara Saikaku (1642–1693), and Chikamatsu Mon'zaemon (1653–1724), respectively. But this view leaves out the two most prominent writers of the period, Arai Hakuseki (1657–1725) and Ogyū Sorai (1666–1728), two influential Confucian scholars who wrote essays and treatises in Chinese.

The notion of literature has changed radically over the fourteen centuries of writing in Japan. Today, literature is generally thought to be imaginative writing, centered on poetry, fiction, and drama, as opposed to writing in the form of discursive reasoning, but this is a relatively recent notion, imported largely from Europe in the nineteenth century. Before the nineteenth century in Europe, literature in fact meant the whole body of valued writing in society: philosophy, history, essays, and letters as well as poetry. Only in the past hundred years or so have "belles lettres," or works of high literary art, been thought of as different from other sorts of writing. Similarly, in Japan, from as early as the Nara period and extending through the Tokugawa period, literature as highly valued writing encompassed a wide body of historical, philosophical, religious, political, and poetic texts. In fact, owing to both Confucian and Buddhist influences, fiction occupied a relatively low position in the textual hierarchy, and the performative arts, including nō, jōruri, and kabuki, were not considered literature until the modern period.

The *Genji One-Volume Sutra* (*Genji ippon kyō*, 1176), a Buddhist text written by Priest Chōken in the late twelfth century, reveals that the genre hierarchy as it existed in the late Heian and early medieval periods was, roughly, from top to bottom: (1) Buddhist scriptures; (2) Confucian texts; (3) histories, such as the *Records of the Historian* (*Shi ji*); (4) Chinese belles lettres (*bun*), such as the *Anthology of Literature* (*Wen xuan*), a collection of Chinese poetry and literary prose; (5) Japanese classical poetry; and (6) vernacular tales and *sōshi*, that is, nikki (diaries) and related writings in kana. The genre hierarchy here follows the Chinese model, with religious/philosophical texts, histories, and poetry held in the highest regard and fiction relegated to the bottom. Here, at the bottom, were the two genres in the Japanese syllabary, waka and monogatari, with waka holding a much higher status than prose fiction in kana. Cultural identity also was a major element in the genre hierarchy. The top four categories, the most prestigious genres, were of foreign origin, identified primarily with China (Kara). The two bottom genres, by contrast, were identified with native culture, with Japan (Yamato).

In the eighteenth century, the scholars of *kokugaku* (nativist study), led by such scholars as Kamo no Mabuchi (1697–1769) and Motoori Norinaga (1730–1801), attacked what they perceived to be foreign influences and constructed an alternative sphere of learning based on what they perceived to be purely Japanese texts. The scholars of nativist learning attempted to invert the genre hierarchy found in texts such as the *Genji ippon kyō*. They placed the texts in the

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Japanese syllabary, such as waka and monogatari, at the top, while attempting to de-canonize the top four categories, especially Buddhist and Confucian texts and Chinese poetry and histories. It was not, however, until the mid-Meiji period—with the rise of modern nationalism, the influence of Western phonocentrism, the emphasis on "national language" (*kokugo*) based on kana, and the defeat of China in the Sino-Japanese War—that this inversion finally became irreversible. Throughout the premodern period, *gakumon*, the Japanese word for "learning," meant *kangaku* (Chinese studies), which was the center of various premodern discourses, and it was not until the establishment of *kokubungaku* (national literature) in the mid-Meiji period that Japanese literature became largely, though not entirely, kana-based literature. This anthology tries to redress this modern imbalance by including a number of writings in Chinese as well as a wide variety of noncanonical genres and texts, which were not considered literature or valuable writing at the time but which have considerable significance today as cultural phenomena.

STRUCTURE OF THIS ANTHOLOGY

Traditional Japanese Literature is the companion volume to *Early Modern Japanese Literature* (Columbia University Press, 2002), and it embraces the diversity of texts, genres, and languages that existed before the construction of the modern canon while highlighting the dominant role of the high genres—such as waka, *kanshi* (Chinese poetry), religious writing, and poetic criticism—and master texts such the *Kokinshū*, *The Tale of Genji*, and *The Tales of the Heike*. Poetry—waka, kanshi, *renga* (linked verse), and then *haikai* (popular linked verse)—was the mainstay of literary activity throughout the premodern and early modern period until the twentieth century and, in the case of kanshi and waka, usually carried the most prestige and authority. Since the Japanese poetic forms of waka, renga, and haikai are extremely short or fragmentary, assumed a common knowledge of pretexts, and engaged in the practice of allusive variation, they depended greatly on references to earlier poetry or prose texts, including Chinese texts. Certain master texts (such as the *Kokinshū* and *The Tale of Genji*), now referred to as the "classics," thus became the repeated source of reference, allusion, and parody across a wide cultural and historical spectrum. For these reasons, this anthology devotes substantial space to these master texts. In a departure from previous anthologies, I also offer extensive commentary and notes on the poetry, which loses much in translation because of its brevity and allusive nature.

The anthology has been designed to be pedagogically useful while at the same time opening the existing academic field to new genres and approaches to Japanese literature and culture. A number of the genres and texts are introduced in English for the first time, and many of the master texts (such as *The Tales of the Heike*) were retranslated specifically for this anthology. A number

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of Buddhist texts, such as *The Essentials of Salvation* (*Ōjōyōshū*) by Genshin (942–1017), which are usually left out of literary anthologies, have been included, since they were critical to the formation of Japan's literary and cultural imagination. I deliberately chose different translators for the poetry to avoid the monotony of having one translator or voice for multiple poets. Longer texts have been abbreviated, with bridges used to cover elided parts.

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Chapter 1

THE ANCIENT PERIOD

THE CULTURAL TOPOGRAPHY

The ancient period covers the broad stretch of time from the prehistorical periods (Jōmon and Yayoi) through the establishment of the Yamato court and the capitals in Asuka and Nara to the move of the capital to Heian (present-day Kyoto) in 794. The two most important areas of ancient Japan were Tsukushi (present-day Kyushu) and Yamato (present-day Nara Prefecture). Tsukushi, which stood on the southwestern edge of Japan, faced Korea (Karakuni) and was the main point of interaction with China and the continent. Beginning in the fourth century C.E., Yamato was the location of the most powerful state in the Japanese archipelago. From the fourth to the end of the eighth century, the capital—*miyako*, literally, "the location (*ko*) of the palace (*miya*)"—was, with a few notable exceptions, almost entirely confined to Yamato. The province of Yamato was located in a fertile basin, surrounded by small mountains (present-day Kyoto Prefecture sits to the north, Mie Prefecture to the east, and Osaka and Wakayama Prefectures to the west and south).

It was via the ports of northern Tsukushi that the Yamato court maintained military and cultural contacts with the continent. The ships coming from abroad first stopped at northern Kyushu, then traveled across the Setonaikai (Inland Sea) and headed for Naniwa (near present-day Osaka), before the

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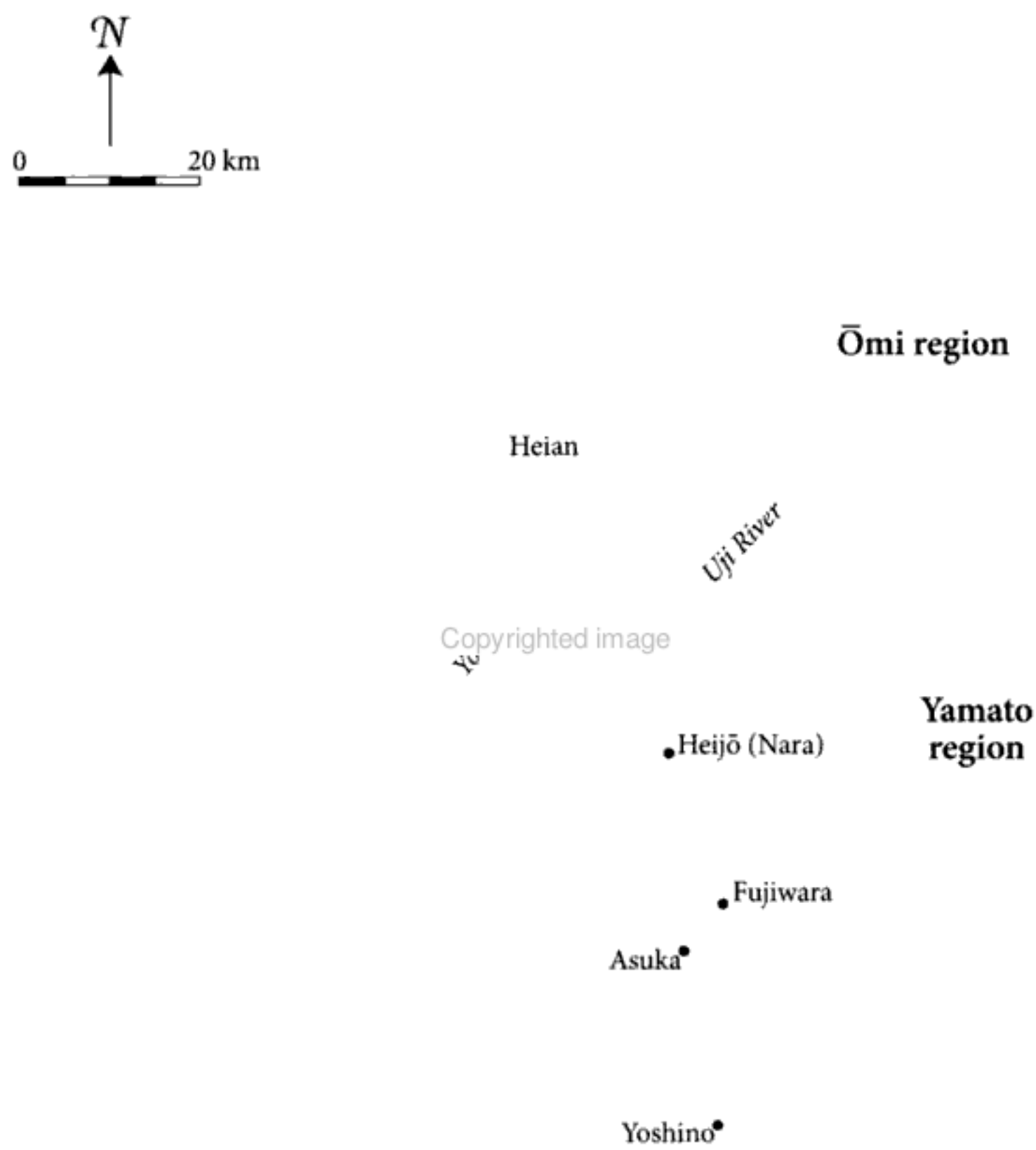

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Map of the Kinai area, centered on the Yamato Basin.

embassies made their way across land to Yamato. If Kyushu was the western border, the eastern border was Hitachi, the northeastern part of the Kantō region now occupied by Ibaraki Prefecture. Hitachi was the entrance to the northeastern region of Honshū, which, according to the eighth-century chronicles, was conquered by the legendary Yamato Takeru (Yamato the Brave) in his eastern expedition. From the perspective of those in the capital, Hitachi, known for Tsukuba Mountain and Kashima Shrine, marked the farthermost reach of Azuma, or the eastern provinces. Hitachi is one of the provinces for which a *fudoki*, or provincial gazetteer, remains.

North of Yamato were Yamashiro, the southern part of present-day Kyoto, and Ōmi, on the southern edge of Lake Biwa, the site of the capital for a very brief period in the late seventh century. Ōmi, in turn, led to the Hokuriku region and the provinces of Echizen, Etchū (where Yakamochi compiled most of the *Man'yōshū*), and Echigo on the Japan Sea side.

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West of Yamato was Izumo, in the area now referred to as San'in, or the Japan Sea coast of southern Honshū. In the early myths and chronicles, Izumo is the land associated with the gods Susano-o and Ōkuni-nushi, and it also is where Yamato the Brave subjugated Izumo the Brave. Izumo is another of the provinces for which a fudoki is extant.

THE TOMB PERIOD, 300–552

The "tomb" period is marked by the emergence in the late third and early fourth centuries of gigantic burial chambers or tombs (*kofun*) along the Inland Sea in the Kinai (Kyoto–Nara–Osaka) area and in Kyushu. These large tombs were built for members of the ruling elite, suggesting an increasingly stratified society. Mirrors, jewels, swords, and other ritual and magical treasures were placed inside the stone burial chambers, and cylindrical clay representations (*haniwa*, or "clay circles") of human figures, houses, boats, horses, and other animals were placed on the tombs.

From the late fourth through the fifth century, the size of these tombs grew dramatically, as did their number, stretching from southern Kyushu to southern Tōhoku (northeastern Honshū). The most famous tombs of this period are the large keyhole-shaped tombs of the sovereigns Ōjin and Nintoku, who are described in the *Kojiki* (*Record of Ancient Matters*, 712) and the *Nihon shoki* (*Chronicles of Japan*, 720) as the fifteenth and sixteenth emperors of Japan.

Sometime in the fourth century, the most powerful lineages in Yamato and the surrounding areas formed what is now referred to as the Yamato court. At first, the Yamato ruler was not a sovereign so much as a ruler acting in a loose confederation of similar chieftains.

In the late fifth century, there developed a system of hereditary occupational groups known as *be*, which supported the Yamato court and contributed to the emergence of a strong centralized Yamato state. These hereditary groups supplied labor, goods, and other services to both the court and the powerful lineages (*uji*). The Yamato court also established diplomatic ties with Korean states and Chinese courts.

THE ASUKA PERIOD, 552–710

The Asuka period refers to the time between 552, when the *Nihon shoki* (*Chronicles of Japan*) states that Buddhism was first introduced from the kingdom of Paekche on the Korea Peninsula to the Yamato court, and 710, when the capital moved to Nara. Empress Suiko (r. 693–628) openly accepted Buddhism and encouraged the building of Buddhist temples. According to the *Nihon shoki*, in 583 the head of the Soga lineage, Soga no Umako, built what is regarded as the oldest Buddhist temple in Japan, the Asukadera (Asuka Temple). Empress Suiko's regent, Prince Shōtoku, is credited with having built the Temple of the Four Deva Kings (Shitennō-ji) in 593 and the Hōryū-

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ji (Temple of the Flourishing Law) in 607. Buddhism—named after the teachings of Shakyamuni, the historical Buddha, who was born in India—was one of the principal vehicles of Chinese civilization, particularly of literature and architecture. In Japan, Buddhism was first thought to cure disease and prevent plagues and was adopted by the ruling Yamato lineage as a means of protecting the realm, but it eventually had a far more profound impact on shaping the Japanese state.

In the mid-seventh century, a series of reforms were carried out in an attempt to establish a centralized state system with an absolute ruler based on the model of the Chinese imperial state. Prince Naka no Ōe (later Emperor Tenchi), together with the leader of the Nakatomi (later Fujiwara) lineage, Nakatomi no Kamatari, destroyed the leaders of the powerful Soga lineage in a coup d'état and had Emperor Kōtoku (r. 645–654) announce the Taika Reforms in order to centralize the power of the various lineages (*uji*) in the hands of the Yamato ruler.

In 667 Emperor Tenchi (r. 662–671) moved the capital to Ōmi, north of present-day Kyoto. Shortly after his death, a succession conflict known as the Jinshin war (672) broke out between Emperor Tenchi's son and designated heir, Prince Ōtomo, who was based in the Ōmi capital, and Emperor Tenchi's younger brother, Prince Ōama (d. 686), who left the capital and moved to Yoshino. With the support of several key powerful lineages, Prince Ōama won the conflict and in the following year became Emperor Tenmu (r. 672–686), moving the capital back to Asuka. Prince Ōtomo committed suicide, and his chief supporters were killed or exiled.

Having consolidated the power of the imperial lineage, Emperor Tenmu ruled directly, using his sons and creating a new social system in which rank was determined by proximity to the imperial family. It is Tenmu who is believed to have been the first Yamato ruler to adopt the title of "emperor" (*tennō*, literally, "heavenly sovereign"). This title, which may originally have been a personal title of Tenmu's, was then institutionalized by his wife and successor Jitō (r. 687–696) and retroactively applied to all past rulers (who had been known simply as "great lords," or *ōkimi*) in the early-eighth-century myth-histories, the *Kojiki* and the *Nihon shoki*. The *Nihon shoki* ends with two long chapters on the reign of Emperor Tenmu and one on the reign of Empress Jitō, describing the Jinshin war and the subsequent new order established by Tenmu and Jitō from the perspective of the victors. Emperor Tenmu also made Buddhism a state religion and had constructed, by imperial command and support, Buddhist temples like the Yakushi-ji (Temple of Healing).

Empress Jitō continued her husband's policies, and in 694 the first Chinese-style cosmological capital of Fujiwara, close to the old Asuka capital, was completed. In 701/702, Emperor Monmu (r. 697–707) issued the Taihō Code, thereby establishing a *ritsuryō* (literally, "law code"), the legal and bureaucratic system that prevailed from the late seventh to the late tenth century. The *ritsu* was the penal code, and the *ryō* was the code of civil and administrative rules.

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The *ryō* created a ruling aristocracy organized as a hierarchical bureaucracy in the service of the emperor. At the top were the chancellor (*daijō daijin*), the minister of the left (*sadaijin*), and the minister of the right (*udaijin*), followed by nobility of the third rank and above, beginning with the major counselor (*dainagon*), middle counselor (*chūnagon*), and consultant (*sangi*). Geographically, the ritsuryō system divided the country into administrative areas that were subdivided into provinces (*kuni*), wards, and villages, with provincial governors, ward chiefs, and village heads assigned to administer each of these units. The name Nihon (Japan), literally meaning "origin of the sun," is thought to date from the end of the Asuka period.

THE NARA PERIOD, 710–784

In 710 the capital was moved to Heijō (present-day Nara). The Heijō capital extended 2.5 miles east to west and 3 miles north to south and had an estimated population of 200,000. Aristocrats of the fifth rank and higher, who had special privileges, numbered about one hundred, while officials of the sixth rank or lower, who were the actual administrators, numbered about six hundred. Around six thousand lower officials were unranked. The aristocracy as a whole, including the families of the officials, amounted to about sixty thousand.

Various Buddhist sects built large temples in the capital, the most notable of which was the Tōdai-ji (Kegon sect), which led to a flourishing culture of Buddhism. In 702 the embassies to China were resumed after a lapse of thirty-three years, and six embassies were sent during the Nara period. There also was interaction with Shiragi and Bokkai (now parts of Korea), resulting in a new wave of cultural importation from the continent.

The aristocratic culture of the eighth century revolved around the new capital of Heijō and is referred to as Tenpyō culture, after the reign-name of Emperor Shōmu (r. 724–749). During the Nara period, a state university was established, with Chinese as the official written language and focusing on the Confucian classics. Even though this period is referred to as the golden age of state government, the ritsuryō system had serious problems from the beginning. The number of poor farmers and vagrants greatly increased, and plagues and famines were commonplace. By the middle of the Nara period, the system of public allocation of land began to break down, and in the latter half of the period there was considerable social unrest, leading to two uprisings. Finally, in 784, Emperor Kanmu (r. 781–806) moved the capital to Nagaoka (near present-day Kyoto), bringing an end to the Nara period. In 794 the capital moved to Heian-kyō, present-day Kyoto, where it remained for many centuries.

THE BEGINNINGS OF JAPANESE LITERATURE

Chinese writing was first brought to the Japanese archipelago around the first century C.E. For many centuries, however, the use of writing was largely limited

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to inscriptions on stone and metal (mirrors, swords), thereby serving a primarily symbolic function. It was not until the seventh century that Chinese writing began to be used widely for administrative, religious, and commercial purposes. The oldest extant literary and historical texts date from the beginning of the eighth century. The *Kojiki* (*Record of Ancient Matters*, 712) and *Nihon shoki* (*Chronicles of Japan*, 720) were written in order to legitimize the new state order by providing an account of how the world came into being and by tracing the origins of the emperor to the age of the gods. In 713, an imperial order was issued to record the origins of the names of various places and products, and the result was the *fudoki*, or provincial gazetteers, which included reports by provincial governors from five different provinces: Hitachi, Harima (present-day Hyōgo Prefecture), Izumo, Bungo, and Hizen (the last two are in Kyushu). Anthologies of Japanese poetry began to be compiled in the late seventh century, and the *Man'yōshū* (*Collection of Myriad Leaves*), an encyclopedic collection of poetry, was compiled throughout the eighth century. An anthology of Chinese poetry, the *Kaifūsō*, was completed in 751.

Before the late seventh century, songs and narratives were transmitted orally in a variety of ways, sometimes as part of tales and at other times as part of festivals and rituals. Traces of these oral narratives (*katari*) survive in the myths and stories of the *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki*, albeit in a different form. Ancient poems (*uta*) of courtship and praise for the ruler also survive in these two texts and in the *Man'yōshū*. The fudoki contain examples of courtship songs known as *utagaki* (literally, "fence songs") or *kagai*, which were sung to the accompaniment of song and dance.

The need to make Chinese writing accessible to non-Chinese speakers led scribes in the Yamato court from the archipelago and the continent to devise methods of reading Chinese script in Japanese. This process gave rise to the development of new hybrid styles of writing that required a knowledge of both the Chinese script and the Japanese language. For instance, in contrast to the *Nihon shoki*, which is written almost entirely in orthodox classical Chinese, the *Kojiki*, which places more emphasis on the spoken word and claims to be a record of oral transmissions, uses Chinese characters arranged with both Chinese and Japanese syntax, with the addition, for clarity, of some characters representing phonetic syllables. In the *Man'yōshū*, poems are written in a variety of ways, ranging from a style close to orthodox classical Chinese to one using Chinese characters as phonetic syllables. All these works, however, were read in the aristocratic Japanese dialect of the Yamato nobility.

Under the influence of Chinese literature, genres of Japanese poetry (*uta*) such as *sōmon* (exchange poems) and *banka* (laments) developed, and the myth-histories of the Yamato court were divided into emperor reigns (as in the Chinese dynastic histories) and chronologized according to the Chinese cosmological calendar (in the case of the *Nihon shoki*). These early written texts were compiled as the products of a court culture that would rival that of the

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Chinese court. As such, they were primarily literate texts. However, while writing represented a new medium that could be transmitted as a material object, it also created a new type of oral culture in which the written text was used as the base and cue for oral and public performance.

Major Events in the Seventh and Eighth Centuries

622	Death of Prince Shōtoku (b. 574)
645	Taika Reforms
667	Move of the capital to Ōmi
671	Death of Emperor Tenchi (r. 662–671)
672	Jinshin war
686	Death of Emperor Tenmu (r. 672–686)
701	Taihō Code
702	Death of Empress Jitō (r. 687–696). Beginning of the compilation of the *Man'yōshū*?
710	Move of the capital to Nara (Heijō)
712	Completion of the *Kojiki*
713	Order to compile the fudoki
720	Completion of the *Nihon shoki*
731	Death of Ōtomo no Tabito (665–731)
733	Death of Yamanoue no Okura (660?–733)
746	Compilation of the *Man'yōshū*, vols. 1–16?
751	Compilation of *Kaifūsō*
784	Move of the capital from Nara to Nagaoka
785	Death of Ōtomo no Yakamochi (717?–785), final compiler of the *Man'yōshū*
794	Move of the capital to Heian (Kyoto)

KOJIKI (*RECORD OF ANCIENT MATTERS*, 712)

According to its preface, the *Kojiki* (*Record of Ancient Matters*) was commissioned by Emperor Tenmu (r. 672–686) and was completed and presented to Empress Genmei (r. 707–715) in 712 by a scribe named Ō no Yasumaro. It is a mythology and history in three volumes, starting with the creation of Japan in the age of the gods and the descent to earth of the ancestor of the imperial family through the reign of the legendary first sovereign, Emperor Jinmu, and successive rulers up to the reign of the thirty-third sovereign, Empress Suiko (r. 592–618).

The key concept of the creation myth, which describes the origin of Japan but not of the universe, is *musuhi*, or "creating force," a spontaneous power through which the gods come into existence. After seven generations of gods

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are created by this force, the last generation, a male and a female god called Izanagi[1] and Izanami, create the islands of Japan. This creation begins with the present-day Shikoku (Tosa, Iyo, Sanuki, Awa), then moves west to Kyushu (Tsukushi), and finally to Honshū. Izanagi and Izanami also give birth to the gods of various natural phenomena, including the gods of the sea and rivers, of the mountains and plains, of the wind, and finally of fire, who causes the death of the female deity Izanami. The male deity Izanagi then gives birth by himself to the central figure in the *Kojiki* mythology, the Sun Goddess Amaterasu. It is Amaterasu's descendant, the god Ninigi, who comes down from heaven to earth and becomes the ancestor of the Yamato emperors.

The *Kojiki* is a bricolage of various myths woven together into a story of the divine ancestry of the Yamato emperors. According to the *Kojiki* cosmology, the earth is dependent on heaven, and the Yamato emperors, as the descendants of the heavenly gods, are entitled to rule the earth. Although some of the myths contained in the *Kojiki* may date from long before the eighth century, their primary function in the narrative was to legitimate the world order of the early-eighth-century Japanese state. Within the various mythical accounts are explanations of the origin of place-names, of the hierarchical relationships between different clans, and of ritual ceremonies.

One key feature of the *Kojiki* is the importance it places on the power of speech. For example, conquests are often described in terms of a verbal pledging of subjection. In the *Kojiki* the word for "subdue" (*kotomuku*) means literally "to make (someone) speak his subjection." The magical power of words is also emphasized in the story of Luck of the Mountain and Luck of the Sea, as well as in the tragic end of Prince Yamato Takeru.

Key Japanese Names and Places

Takama-no-hara	Plain of High Heaven
Ashihara no kuni	Central Land of the Reed Plains
Izanagi	He Who Invites God
Izanami	She Who Invites God
Amaterasu	Great Heaven-Shining Goddess
Tsukuyomi	Moon God (Moon-Counting God)
Susano-o	Ferocious Virulent Male God
Ho-deri	Fire-Shine, Luck of the Sea
Ho-ori	Fire-Fade, Luck of the Mountain
Ōkuni-nushi	Great Land Master
Ninigi	(descendant of Amaterasu)

1. In the ancient period, the correct pronunciation of the male god's name was "Izanaki," but in modern times the customary reading is "Izanagi."

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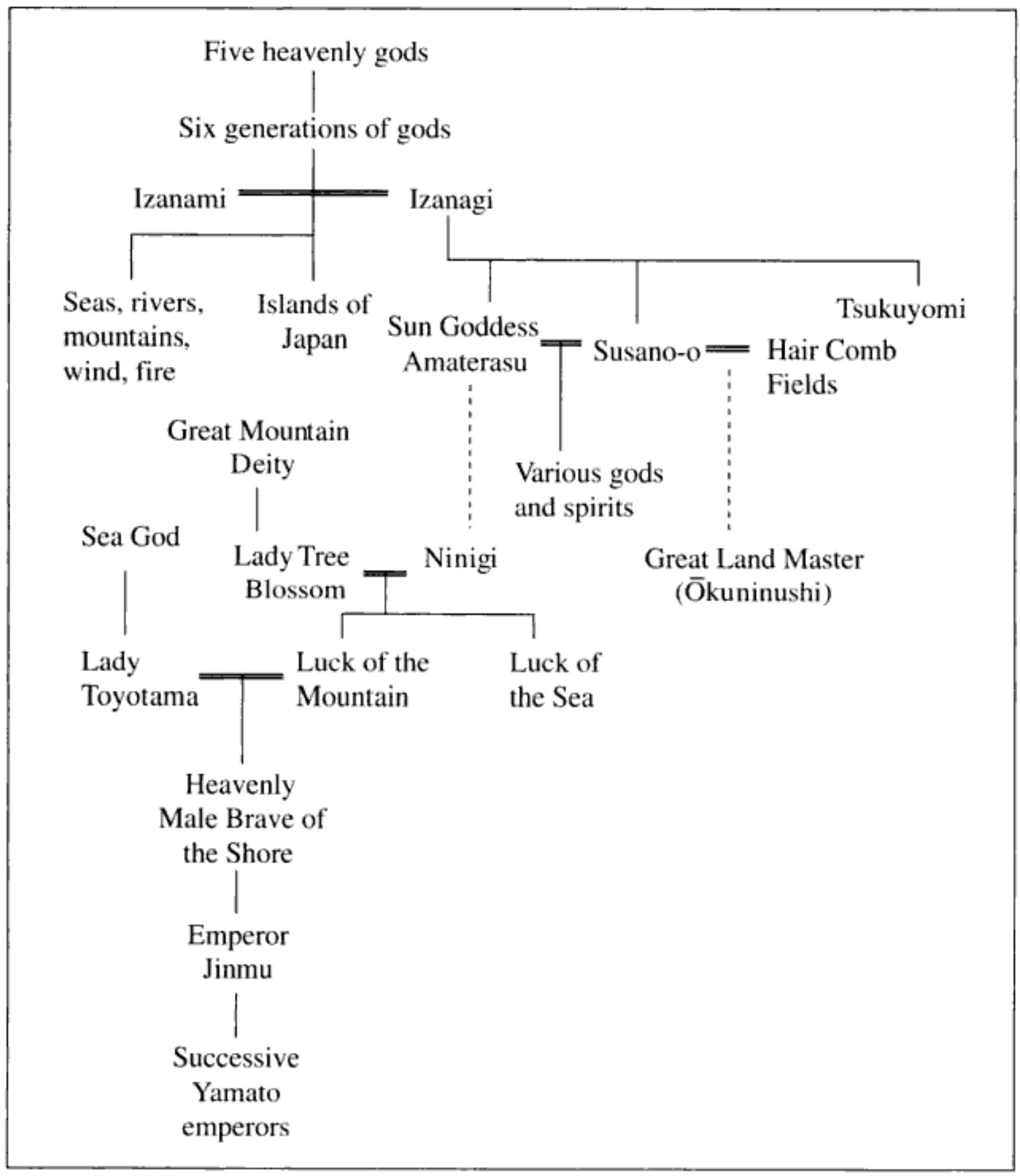

Genealogy of the Gods

Book 1

THE BEGINNING

When heaven and earth first appeared, there came into existence in the Plain of High Heaven a deity named Lord Midst-of-Heaven God; then High Creative Force God; and then Divine Creative Force God. All these three deities came into existence as single deities, and their forms were not visible. Next, when the land was young, resembling floating oil and drifting like jellyfish, a thing sprouted forth like reed shoots, and from this there came into existence a deity named Splendid Reed Shoot God and then Eternally Standing Heaven God. These two deities also came into existence as single deities, and their forms were not visible. The five deities in the preceding section are the Separate Heavenly Deities.

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Next there came into existence Eternally Standing Land God and then Abundant Clouds Field God. These two deities also came into existence as single deities, and their forms were not visible. Next there came into existence Clay Male God and then his spouse, Silt Female God. Next, Emergent Form God and then his spouse, Living Form God. Next, Great Male Organ God and then his spouse, Great Female Organ God. Next, Ample Face God and then his spouse, Awe-Inspiring God. Next, Izanagi, He Who Invites God, and then his spouse, Izanami, She Who Invites God. The deities in the preceding section, from Eternally Standing Land God through Izanami, are known collectively as the Seven Generations of the Age of the Gods. . . .

SOLIDIFYING THE LAND

At this time the heavenly deities, acting jointly, commanded the two deities Izanagi and Izanami: "Complete and solidify this drifting land." Giving them the Heavenly Jeweled Spear, they entrusted the mission to them. Thereupon, the two deities stood on the Heavenly Floating Bridge and, lowering the jeweled spear, stirred, churning the brine with a resonating sound, and when they lifted it up, the brine dripping down from the tip of the spear piled up and became an island. This was Onogoro, Self-Congealing Island.

Descending from the heavens to this island, they erected a heavenly pillar and a spacious palace. At this time Izanagi asked his spouse Izanami, "How is your body formed?" She replied, "My body, formed though it be formed, has one place that is formed insufficiently." Then Izanagi said, "My body, formed though it be formed, has one place that is formed to excess. Therefore I would like to take that place in my body that is formed to excess and insert it into that place in your body that is formed insufficiently and give birth to the land. How would this be?" Izanami replied, "This would be good." Then Izanagi said, "Then let us, you and me, walk in a circle around this heavenly pillar and meet and have conjugal intercourse."

Having thus agreed, Izanagi then said, "You walk around from the right, and I will walk around from the left and meet you." After having agreed to this, they circled around. Then Izanami said first, "O, how good a lad!" after which Izanagi said, "O, how good a maiden!" After each had finished speaking, Izanagi said to his spouse, "It is not proper that the woman speak first."

Nevertheless, they commenced procreation and gave birth to a leech-child. They placed this child into a boat made of reeds and floated it away. Next, they gave birth to an island of foam. This also is not reckoned as one of their children. Then the two deities consulted together and said, "The children that we have just borne are not good. It is best to report this matter to the heavenly deities." Then they ascended together and sought the will of the heavenly deities. The heavenly deities thereupon performed a grand divination and said, "Because the woman spoke first, the outcome was not good. Descend once more and say

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it again." Then they descended again and walked once more in a circle around the heavenly pillar as before.

Then Izanagi said first, "O, how good a maiden!" Afterward, his spouse Izanami said, "O, how good a lad!" After they had finished saying this, they were united and bore, as a child, Awaji Island.

Next they bore the double island of Iyo. This island has one body and four countenances, each with a separate name. Thus, the land of Iyo is named Darling Woman; the land of Sanuki is named Grain Spirit Possessed Man; the land of Awa is called Great Food Woman; and the land of Tosa is called Fierce Spirit Possessed Man. Next they bore the triple island of Oki. . . .

When they finished giving birth to countries, they began giving birth to deities anew. . . . Then they gave birth to the Swift Burning Fire Deity. As a result of giving birth to this child, Izanami's genitals were burned, and she lay down sick. In her vomit there came into existence the Metal Mountain God. Next, in her feces, there came into existence the Clay Earth God and the Clay Earth Goddess. Next, in her urine, there came into existence the Goddess of Irrigation and the God of Agricultural Creation. The child of this deity was the Goddess of Food. Thus, at last, Izanami, because she had given birth to the fire deity, divinely passed away.

A grieving Izanagi buries his spouse and kills the fire deity, whose birth caused Izanami's death. Still grieving, Izanagi decides to visit Izanami in the land of Yomi.

VISIT TO THE LAND OF YOMI

At this time, Izanagi, wishing to meet again his spouse Izanami, went after her to the land of Yomi. When she came out of the door of the hall to greet him, Izanagi said, "O, my beloved spouse, the lands that you and I were making have not yet been completed. You must come back."

Then Izanami replied, saying, "How I regret that you did not come sooner. I have eaten at the hearth of Yomi. But, O, my beloved husband, how honored I am that you have come here! Therefore I will go and discuss for a while with the deities of Yomi my desire to return. Pray do not look at me." Thus saying, she went back into the hall, but she was gone so long that Izanagi could no longer wait. So he broke off one of the large end-teeth of the comb he was wearing in his left hair bunch, lit a fire, and entered the hall to look. Maggots squirmed and rolled; on her head sat Great Thunder; on her breast sat Fire Thunder; on her belly sat Black Thunder; on her genitals sat Crack Thunder; on her left hand sat Young Thunder; on her right hand sat Earth Thunder; on her left foot sat Sounding Thunder; and on her right foot sat Reclining Thunder. All together, eight thunder deities were there.

Upon seeing this, Izanagi became afraid and turned and fled. Then his spouse Izanami said, "He has shamed me." Right away she dispatched the hags

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of Yomi to pursue him. Then Izanagi undid the black vine securing his hair and flung it down. Immediately it bore grapes. While the hags were picking the grapes and eating them, he fled. Still they pursued him. Next Izanagi pulled out the comb he was wearing in his right hair bunch and flung it down. Immediately bamboo shoots sprouted forth. While the hags were pulling the bamboo shoots and eating them, he fled. Later, Izanami dispatched the eight thunder deities and a horde of warriors of Yomi to pursue him. Then Izanagi unsheathed the ten-hands-long sword that he wore at his side and waved it behind him as he fled. The pursuit continued. When Izanagi reached the foot of the Steep Pass of Yomi, he took three peaches that were at the foot of the pass and ambushed his pursuers. They all turned and fled. Then Izanagi said to the peaches, "Just as you have saved me, if in the Central Land of the Reed Plains, any of the race of mortal men should fall into painful straits and suffer in anguish, please save them also." Saying this, he bestowed on the peaches the name Oho-kamu-zu-mi, Great Divine Spirit God.

Finally, his spouse Izanami herself came in pursuit of him. Then Izanagi picked up an enormous boulder, requiring the strength of a thousand men to move, and blocked the Steep Pass of Yomi. They stood facing each other, one on each side of the boulder, and broke their troth. At this time, Izanami said, "O, my beloved husband, if you do thus, I will each day strangle to death one thousand of the populace of your land." To this Izanagi said, "O, my beloved spouse, if you do thus, I will each day build fifteen hundred birthing huts." This is the reason why one thousand people inevitably die and fifteen hundred people inevitably are born every day. Therefore, the deity Izanami is also called the Great Deity of Yomi. Also, because she joined in the pursuit, she is called the Great Deity Who Lays the Road. The boulder that closed the Steep Pass of Yomi is called the Great Deity Who Repels Enemies on the Road. It is also called the Great Deity Who Blocks the Door of Yomi. This Steep Pass of Yomi is said to be now the Ifuya Pass in the land of Izumo.

At this point Izanagi said, "I have been to a most unpleasant land, a horrible, unclean land. Therefore I shall purify myself." Arriving at the plain of Awaki by the river mouth of Tachibana in Himuka in Tsukushi, he purified and exorcised himself.

When he flung down his stick, there came into existence a deity named Cane in the Road Bend.

As Izanagi cleanses himself, many deities are born.

Then when he washed his left eye, there came into existence a deity named Amaterasu, the Great Heaven Shining Goddess. Next, when he washed his right eye, there came into existence a deity named Tsukuyomi, the Moon-Counting God. Next, when he washed his nose, there came into existence a deity named Susano-o, Ferocious Virulent Male God.

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The fourteen deities in the preceding section, from the Many Afflictions Spirit through Susano-o, are deities born from bathing his body.

At this time Izanagi, rejoicing greatly, said, "I have borne child after child, and finally in the last bearing I have obtained three noble children." Then he removed his necklace, shaking the beads on the string so that they jingled, and, giving it to the deity Amaterasu, he entrusted her with a mission, saying: "You shall rule the Plain of High Heaven." . . .

Next he said to the deity Tsukuyomi, entrusting him with this mission: "You shall rule the realms of night."

Next he said to the deity Susano-o, entrusting him with this mission: "You shall rule the ocean."

Although Susano-o is given the rule of the ocean, he weeps and howls for his mother and neglects the realm entrusted to him. Angered by Susano-o's disobedience, Izanagi expels Susano-o.

SUSANO-O AND AMATERASU

At the time, Susano-o said, "In that case, before I go I will take my leave of the Great Deity Amaterasu." When he ascended to the heavens, all the mountains and rivers roared, and all the land trembled. Amaterasu heard this, was startled, and said, "It is certainly not with any good intentions that my brother is coming up. He must wish to usurp my lands." So, undoing her hair, she wrapped it in hair bunches. She wrapped long strings of myriad *magatama* beads[2] in the hair bunches on the left and right of her head, on the vine securing her hair, as well as on her left and right arms. On her back she bore a thousand-arrow quiver; at her side she strapped a five-hundred-arrow quiver and also put on a magnificent bamboo arm-cover. Shaking the upper tip of her bow, stamping her legs up to her very thighs into the hard earth, and kicking the earth about as if it were light snow, she let out a tremendous war cry and stamped her feet with fury. Thus waiting for him, she asked, "Why have you come?"

Then Susano-o replied, "I have no evil intentions. It is merely that the Great Deity Izanagi divinely inquired about my weeping and howling, so I said that I was weeping because I wished to go to the land of my mother. Then the Great Deity said, 'You may not live in this land' and expelled me with a divine expulsion. Whereupon I came up intending to take leave upon my departure. I have no other intentions." Then Amaterasu said, "If that is so, how am I to know that your intentions are pure and clear?" Then Susano-o replied, "Let us swear oaths and bear children."

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2. *Magatama* are curved beads, usually with a hole bored through them in order to use in a necklace, made of semiprecious stones.

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Then they each stood on opposite sides of the Serene River of Heaven and swore their oaths. At this time, Amaterasu first asked for the ten-hands-long sword that Susano-o wore at his side. Breaking the sword in three pieces, she rinsed them in the heavenly well, the jewel-like ringing resonating clearly, chewed them to pieces, and spat them out. In the misty spray there came into existence a deity named Lady Mist, also named Lady of Oki Island. Next, Lady of Ichiki Island, also named Lady Sayori. Next, Lady Gushing Water.

Susano-o, asking for the long strand of myriad magatama beads wrapped on Amaterasu's left hair bunch, rinsed them in the heavenly well, the jewels' ringing resonating clearly, chewed them to pieces, and spat them out. In the misty spray there came into existence a deity named Truly-I-Have-Won Victorious-Virulent-Spirit-Heavenly-Majestic-Grain-Force. Again, he asked for the beads wrapped on her right hair bunch, chewed them to pieces, and spat them out. In the misty spray there came into existence a deity named Heavenly Grain Spirit. Again, he asked for the beads wrapped on the vine securing her hair, chewed them to pieces, and spat them out. In the misty spray there came into existence a deity named Heavenly Male Child. Again, he asked for the beads wrapped on her left arm, chewed them to pieces, and spat them out. In the misty spray there came into existence a deity named Vibrant Male Child. Again, he asked for the beads wrapped on her right arm, chewed them to pieces, and spat them out. In the misty spray there came into existence a deity named Wondrous Spirit of Kumano. All together there were five deities.

At this time, Amaterasu said to Susano-o, "The latter-born five male children came into existence from my possessions and are therefore naturally my children. The firstborn three female children came into existence from your possessions and are therefore your children." Thus, she determined the allotment of the offspring. . . .

Then Susano-o said to Amaterasu, "It was because my intentions were pure and clear that in the children I begot I obtained graceful maidens. By this it is obvious that I have won." Thus saying, he raged with victory, breaking down the ridges of Amaterasu's rice paddies and filling up the ditches. Also he defecated and strewed his feces about in the hall where the first fruits were tasted. Even though he did this, Amaterasu did not reprove him but said, "What appears to be feces must be what my brother has vomited and strewn about while drunk. Also, as to his breaking down the ridges of the rice paddies and filling up the ditches, my brother must have done so because he felt land was being wasted." Even though she spoke thus in remedy, his misdeeds did not cease but became even more flagrant. When Amaterasu was inside the sacred weaving hall, seeing to the weaving of the divine garments, he opened a hole in the roof of the weaving hall and dropped into it the heavenly dappled horse, which he had skinned backward. The heavenly weaving maiden, shocked at the sight, struck her genitals against the shuttle and died.

Now Amaterasu, seeing this, became afraid, and opening the door of the Heavenly Rock-Cave, went in and shut herself inside. Then the Plain of High

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Heaven was completely dark, and the Central Land of the Reed Plains was entirely dark. Because of this, constant night reigned, and the cries of the myriad deities filled the air like flies in the summer, and all manners of calamities arose.

Then the eight hundred myriad deities assembled in a divine assembly on the banks of the Serene River of Heaven. They called upon the deity Profound Thinker, child of the deity High Creative Force, to think. They gathered together the long-crying birds of Tokoyo, the Everlasting Realm, and caused them to cry. They took the heavenly hard rock from the upper streams of the Serene River of Heaven, took iron from the Fragrant Mountain of Heaven, sought the smith Heavenly Mara, and commissioned Stone-Cutting Woman to make a mirror. They commissioned Forefather of Jewel Workers to make long strings of myriad magatama beads. They summoned Heavenly Koyane and Futo-tama, the Magnificent Jewel God, to remove whole the shoulder bone of a male deer of the Fragrant Mountain of Heaven and take heavenly *hahaka* wood from the Fragrant Mountain of Heaven and perform divination. They uprooted by the very roots the flourishing *masakaki* tree of the Fragrant Mountain of Heaven. To the upper branches they affixed long strings of myriad magatama beads; in the middle branches they hung a mirror many spans wide; and in the lower branches they suspended white strips of *nikite* cloth and blue strips of *nikite* cloth. Magnificent Jewel carried these various objects as solemn offerings; Heavenly Koyane intoned a solemn liturgy; the deity Heavenly Powerful-Handed Male stood concealed beside the door; and Uzume, the Heavenly Woman-with-Hair-Piece Goddess, bound up her sleeves with a cord of the heavenly *hikage* vine, tied around her head a head band of the heavenly *masaki* vine, and bound together bundles of *sasa* leaves to hold in her hands. Overturning a bucket before the door of the Heavenly Rock-Cave, she stamped thunderously and, becoming divinely possessed, exposed her breasts and pushed her skirt band down to her genitals. Then the Plain of High Heaven shook as the eight hundred myriad deities laughed at once.

At this time, Amaterasu, thinking this strange, opened a crack in the door of the Heavenly Rock-Cave and said from within, "Because I have shut myself in, I thought that the Plain of High Heaven would be dark and the Central Land of the Reed Plains would be completely dark. Why is it that Uzume, Heavenly Woman-with-Hair-Piece, sings and dances and all the eight hundred myriad deities laugh?"

Then Uzume, Heavenly Woman-with-Hair-Piece, said, "We rejoice and dance because there is here a deity superior to you." While she was saying this, Heavenly Koyane and Magnificent Jewel brought out the mirror and showed it to Amaterasu. Then Amaterasu, thinking this more and more strange, gradually came out of the door and approached the mirror. Then the deity Heavenly Powerful-Handed Male, who had hidden himself, grasped her hand and pulled her out. Immediately Magnificent Jewel extended a sacred rope behind her, and said, "You may not go back behind this." When Amaterasu came forth, the

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Plain of High Heaven and the Central Land of the Reed Plains naturally became light. At this time the eight hundred myriad deities deliberated together and imposed on Susano-o a fine of a thousand platters of restitutive goods. In addition, they cut off his beard and the nails of his hands and feet, had him exorcised, and expelled him with a divine expulsion.

SUSANO-O SLAYS THE EIGHT-TAILED SERPENT

Therefore Susano-o was expelled and descended to the upper reaches of the Hi River in the land of Izumo, to a place called Torikami. At that time a chopstick came flowing down the river. Thinking that there were people upstream, Susano-o set out in search of them. He came upon an old man and an old woman, with a maiden between them, crying. He asked them, "Who are you?" The old man replied, "I am a child of an earthly deity, the Great Deity of the Mountains. My name is Rubbing Feet; my wife's name is Rubbing Hands; and our daughter's name is Hair Comb Fields."

Susano-o asked further, "Why are you crying?"

Rubbing Feet replied, "We originally had eight daughters, but the eight-tailed serpent of Koshi has come every year and eaten them. We are crying because it is now time for him to come again." Susano-o asked, "What is his appearance?" Rubbing Feet replied, "His eyes are like red ground cherries, and his body has eight heads and eight tails. On his body grow moss and cypress and cryptomeria trees. His length is such that he spans eight valleys and eight mountain peaks. If you look at his belly, you see that blood is oozing out all over it."

Then Susano-o said to the old man, "Will you give me your daughter?" Rubbing Feet answered, "Awed as I am, I do not know your name." Susano-o replied, "I am the brother of the great deity Amaterasu and have just descended from heaven." Then Rubbing Feet and Rubbing Hand said, "If that is so, we reverently present her to you."

Then Susano-o transformed the maiden into a hair comb, which he put in his hair. He said to Rubbing Feet and Rubbing Hand, "Distill thick wine of eightfold brewings, build a fence, and make eight doors in the fence. At each door, set up eight woven platforms, and on each of these platforms place a wine barrel. Fill each barrel with the thick wine of eightfold brewings, and wait."

They made the preparations as he had instructed, and as they waited, the eight-tailed serpent came indeed, as the old man had said. Putting one head into each of the barrels, the serpent drank the wine, then becoming drunk, he lay down and slept. Then Susano-o unsheathed the ten-hands-long sword that he was wearing at his side and hacked the serpent to pieces. The Hi River ran with blood. When he cut the serpent's middle tail, the blade of his sword chipped. Thinking this strange, he thrust deeper with the stump of his sword, until a great sharp sword appeared. He took out this sword and, thinking it an

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extraordinary thing, presented it to the great deity Amaterasu. This is the sword Kusanagi, Grass Feller.

Thereupon Susano-o sought a place in the land of Izumo to build his palace. Arriving at Suga he said, "Coming here, my heart is refreshed [*sugashi*]," and in that place he built his palace and dwelled. Therefore that place is still called Suga. When this great deity first built the palace of Suga, clouds rose from that place. He composed a song, which said:

yakumo tatsu	In eight-cloud-rising
Izumo yaegaki	Izumo an eightfold fence
tsumagomi ni	to enclose my wife
yaegaki tsukuru	an eightfold fence I build,
sono yaegaki o	and, oh, that eightfold fence!

Then he summoned Rubbing Feet and said, "Be the headman of my palace." He also bestowed upon him the name Palace-Master of Inada, Deity of Suga with Manifold Spiritual Powers. Then he commenced procreation with Hair Comb Fields. . . .

THE HEAVENLY DESCENT

Then Amaterasu and the High Creative Force Deity commanded the heir apparent Heavenly Grain, saying: "Now it is reported that the pacification of the Central Land of the Reed Plains has been finished. Therefore descend and rule it, as you have been entrusted with it." Then the heir apparent Heavenly Grain replied, saying: "As I was preparing to descend, a child was born; his name is Ninigi. This child should descend." This child was born of his union with the daughter of the High Creative Force Deity. . . . Thereupon, in accordance with his words, they imposed the command on Ninigi: "The Land of the Plentiful Reed Plains has been entrusted to you as the land you are to rule. In accordance with the command, descend from the heavens!"

Then, as Ninigi was about to descend from the heavens, there appeared in the myriad heavenly crossroads a deity whose radiance shone above through the Plain of High Heaven and below through the Central Land of the Reed Plains. Amaterasu and the High Creative Force Deity commanded Heavenly Woman-with-Hair-Piece, saying: "Although you are a graceful maiden, you are the type of deity who can face and overwhelm others. Therefore go alone and inquire: 'Who is here on the path of my offspring descending from the heavens?'"

When she inquired, the reply was: "I am an earthly deity named Sarutabiko. I have come out because I have heard that the offspring of the heavenly deities is to descend from the heavens, and I have come forth to wait so that I might serve as his guide."

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Then assigning roles to Heavenly Koyane, Magnificent Jewel, Heavenly Woman-with-Hair-Piece, Stone-Cutting Woman, and Forefather of Jewel-Workers, all together five clan heads, they had them descend from the heavens. Amaterasu gave to Ninigi the myriad magatama curved beads, the mirror that had been used to lure her, as well as the sword Kusanagi, Grass Feller; and also sent along the Profound Thinker Deity, the Heavenly Powerful-Handed Male Deity, and the Heavenly Rock Door Youth Deity. . . .

Then Ninigi was commanded to leave the Heavenly Rock Seat. Pushing through the myriad layers of the heavens' trailing clouds, pushing his way with an awesome might, he stood on a flat floating island by the Heavenly Floating Bridge and descended from the heavens to the peak Kujifurutake of Mount Takachiho of Himuka in Tsukushi. . . .

Ninigi said: "This place is opposite the land of Kara; it is a land where the morning sun shines directly, a land where the rays of the evening sun are brilliant. This is a most excellent place."

Thus saying, he rooted his palace posts firmly in the bedrock below, raised high the crossbeams unto the Plain of High Heaven itself, and dwelled there. . . .

Ninigi met a lovely maiden at the Cape of Kasasa. He asked: "Whose daughter are you?" She replied: "I am the daughter of the Great Mountain God, and my name is Lady Divine Ata. I am also called Lady Tree Blossom." Again Ninigi asked: "Do you have any brothers and sisters?" She replied: "I have an elder sister, Lady Rock-Eternal." Then he said: "I wish to marry you. What is your wish?" She replied: "I cannot say. My father the Great Mountain Deity will say."

When he sent for permission to her father the Great Mountain Deity, her father rejoiced greatly and gave in addition the elder sister Rock-Eternal Princess and had hundreds of tables laden with gifts and presented to Ninigi.

But when Ninigi saw the elder sister, he was afraid because of her exceeding ugliness and sent her back; he kept only the younger sister Tree Blossom Princess and had conjugal intercourse with her for one night.

Then the Great Mountain Deity, shamed because Rock-Eternal Princess had been sent back, sent word: "The reason I offered both my daughters together was this: I presented them swearing an oath that if he should take Rock-Eternal Princess, the life of the child of the heavenly deities, even though the snow should fall and the wind should blow, would be ever like a rock and would continue eternally, firmly, without being moved; and also that if he should take Tree Blossom Princess, the child would flourish, just as the blossoms of the trees flourish. However, now that he has returned Rock-Eternal Princess and kept only Tree Blossom Princess, the life of the child of the heavenly deities shall continue only for the interval of the blossoming of the trees."

For this reason, until this day, the emperors have not been long-lived.

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Later, Tree Blossom Princess came forth and said: "I am with child, and now the time of my delivery is near. I say this because it would not be fitting for the child of the heavenly deities to be born in secret."

Then Ninigi said: "Can Tree Blossom have become pregnant after only one night? This is not my child; surely it must be the child of an earthly deity." Then Tree Blossom replied: "If the child I bear be the child of an earthly deity, then it shall not be born safely; if it be the child of the heavenly deities, then it shall be safe."

Then she built a palace many yards long without a door; entering this palace, she spread clay to close it up; and when she was about to deliver the child, she set fire to the palace and gave birth.

The child born as the flames were burning furiously was named Ho-deri, Fire-Shine Lord. The child born next was named Ho-suseri, Fire-Raging Lord. The child born next was named Ho-ori, Fire-Fade Lord.

LUCK OF THE SEA AND LUCK OF THE MOUNTAIN

Thereupon Fire-Shine Lord, as Luck of the Sea, hunted the wide-finned and the narrow-finned fish, and Fire-Fade Lord, as Luck of the Mountain, hunted the coarse-furred and the soft-furred game. Then Luck of the Mountain said to his elder brother Luck of the Sea, "Let us exchange our luck." Although he repeated this request three times, his elder brother refused. Finally, however, he was able to get his brother to consent to the exchange. Then, when Luck of the Mountain was fishing with the luck of the sea, he was unable to catch even a single fish, and he lost his fishhook in the sea.

Then his elder brother Luck of the Sea asked to have the fishhook back, saying, "The luck of the mountain is your own luck-luck, the luck of the sea is my own luck-luck, let us now give each back his own luck." Then the younger brother Luck of the Mountain replied, "When I fished with your fishhook, I caught not a single fish, and I finally lost it in the sea." However, his elder brother stubbornly insisted. Even when the younger brother broke up a ten-hands-long sword and made it into five hundred hooks as compensation, he would not accept them. Again, he made a thousand hooks as compensation, but he still would not accept them, saying, "I still want my original hook."

Then when the younger brother was weeping and lamenting by the seashore, the Tide Path God came and asked, "Why are you weeping and lamenting, He Who Is High as the Sun in the Sky?" Luck of the Mountain replied, "I borrowed my elder brother's fishhook, and I lost it. Since he asked for his hook, I repaid him with many hooks, but he will not receive them, saying, 'I still want my original hook.' That is why I am weeping and lamenting."

Then the Tide Path God said, "I will give you good counsel." He then made a small boat of closely woven bamboo, put Luck of the Mountain into this boat,

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and instructed, "When I push this boat free, continue to sail for a little while. Then there will be a very good path of tide in the sea. Continue going on this path, and you will come to a palace made as if with the scales of fish, the palace of Watatsumi, the sea god. When you reach the gate of this deity, there will be a luxuriant *katsura* tree next to a well at its side. If you climb to the top of this tree, the daughter of the sea deity will see you and will give you counsel."

Thereupon Luck of the Mountain went as he was instructed, and everything was exactly as he had been told. He climbed up the katsura tree and waited. Then the serving maid of Toyotama, Lady Precious Soul, daughter of the sea god, brought out a fine jar to draw water, at which time she noticed a light in the well. Looking up, she saw a lovely young man. She thought this exceedingly strange. At this point Luck of the Mountain, seeing the serving maid, asked her to give him some water. The maid drew water, put it into the fine jar, and offered it to him. Then, instead of drinking the water, he unfastened a jewel from his neck, put it into his mouth, and spat it into the fine jar. Thereupon the jewel stuck fast to the jar, and the maid could not remove it. Therefore she presented it to Lady Toyotama with the jewel attached inside.

Seeing this jewel, she asked the maid, "Is there perhaps someone outside the gate?" The maid replied, "There is a person in the katsura tree next to the well. He is an exceedingly lovely young man, much nobler than our master. He asked for water, and when I offered water to him, he did not drink but spat this jewel into the jar. Since I was unable to remove it, I brought it with the jewel attached inside to present to you." Then Lady Toyotama, thinking this strange, went outside to take a look. Quite taken at the sight, they gazed at each other.

To her father she said, "There is a noble person at our gate." Then the sea god went out himself to take a look and said, "This is He Who Is High as the Sun in the Sky, son of He Who Is High as the Sun in Heaven." Then he brought him inside, spread out eightfold layers of sealskin carpets, then spread out eightfold layers of silk carpets above them, seated Luck of the Mountain on top of these, set out a hundred tables laden with gifts, prepared a banquet, and gave him his daughter Toyotama in marriage. Therefore he lived in this land for three years.

At this time, Luck of the Mountain remembered the things of the past and sighed deeply. Toyotama heard this sigh and said to her father, "In the three years he has lived here, he has never sighed, yet last night he sighed deeply. What could be the reason?" Then her father, the great god, asked his son-in-law, "According to what my daughter said this morning, in the three years that you have lived here, you have never sighed, yet last night you sighed deeply. What is the reason? Also, what is the reason for your coming here?" Then Luck of the Mountain told the great god in detail about how his elder brother demanded the fishhook that had been lost.

Thereupon, the sea deity summoned together all the large and small fish of the sea and asked them whether any fish had taken the fishhook. Then the

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myriad fish said, "Recently the sea bream has complained that a bone is caught in its throat and it cannot eat anything. Certainly this fish has taken it." At this time they looked in the sea bream's throat and found the fishhook. Therefore they took it out, washed it, and presented it to Luck of the Mountain. At this time the great sea god Watatsumi instructed, "When you give this hook to your elder brother, you should say, 'This hook is a gloomy hook, an uneasy hook, a poor hook, a dull hook.' So saying, hand it to him behind your back. Then if your elder brother makes rice paddies on high ground, make yours on low ground. If your elder brother makes rice paddies on low ground, make yours on high ground. If you do this, since I control the water, within three years your brother will be poverty stricken. If he becomes bitter and angry and attacks you, take the tide-raising pearl and cause him to drown. If he pleads for mercy, take the tide-ebbing pearl and cause him to live. So cause him anguish and suffering." Saying so, the sea god gave Luck of the Mountain the tide-raising pearl and the tide-ebbing pearl.

Then he summoned together all the crocodiles and asked, "Now, He Who Is High as the Sun in the Sky, son of He Who Is High as the Sun in Heaven, is about to journey to the upper land. Which one of you will escort him and return to report, in how many days?" Then each of them answered, numbering the days in accordance with their length. Among them, the one-length crocodile said, "I will escort him and return in one day." Then the sea god said to the one-length crocodile, "In that case, escort him. Do not give him cause for fright while crossing the sea." Thus, the sea god put Luck of the Mountain on the crocodile's neck and sent him off. As had been promised, the crocodile escorted him home in a day. When the crocodile was about to start back, Luck of the Mountain removed the dagger he had been wearing and fastened it around the crocodile's neck before sending it off. Therefore this one-length crocodile is now called the God Who Holds a Dagger.

Then Luck of the Mountain returned the hook to his brother exactly as he had been instructed by the sea deity. From that time onward, his elder brother became poorer and poorer. His disposition became more violent, and he came to attack Luck of the Mountain. Whenever he was attacked, Luck of the Mountain took out the tide-raising pearl and caused his elder brother to drown. Then when the elder brother pleaded for mercy, he took out the tide-ebbing pearl and saved him. So he caused his elder brother anguish and suffering. At the time the elder brother prostrated himself and said, "From now on, I shall serve you day and night as your guard." Thus, to this day the elder brother's descendants (the Hayato) still serve the emperor by performing these drowning motions.

At this time, the daughter of the sea god, Toyotama, came forth and said: "I have been with child for some time, and now the time of my delivery is near. I thought that it would not be fitting for the child of the heavenly deities to be born in the ocean. Therefore I have come forth." Then, by the edge of the

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beach, a parturition hut was built, thatched with cormorant feathers. But before the parturition hut had been completely thatched, the urgency of her womb became unendurable, and she entered into the parturition hut. As she was about to be delivered of her child, she said to her husband: "All persons of other lands, when they bear their young, revert to the form of their original land and give birth. Therefore, I too am going to revert to my original form and give birth. Pray do not look at me!"

Then thinking her words strange, he watched in secret as she was about to give birth; she turned into a giant crocodile and went crawling and slithering around. Seeing this, he was astonished and ran away. Then Toyotama, learning that he had been watching, felt extremely shamed and, leaving behind the child she had borne, said: "I had always intended to go back and forth across the pathways of the sea; however, now that my form has been seen, I am exceedingly ashamed." Then, closing the sea border, she went back into the sea. For this reason, the child whom she bore is called Heavenly Male Brave of the Shore.

Nevertheless, although she was angry with him for having looked at her, she was still unable to subdue her yearning and sent her younger sister Lady Tamayori to nurse the child, entrusting her with a song, which said:

akadama wa	Beautiful are red jewels;
o sae hikaredo	even their cord seems to sparkle.
shiratama no	But I prefer pearls
kimi ga yosoishi	for the awesome beauty
toutoku arikeri	of your pearl-like form.

Then her husband replied with the song:

oki tsu tori	As long as I have life,
kamo doku shima ni	I shall never forget
waga ineshi	my beloved, with whom I slept
imo wa wasureji	on an island where wild ducks,
yo no kotogoto ni	birds of the offing, came to land.

Luck of the Mountain dwelled in the palace of Takachi-ho for 580 years. His tomb is west of Mount Takachi-ho.

After this, Heavenly Male Brave of the Shore takes his aunt Lady Tamayori as his wife, and she gives birth to three children: the eldest crosses over to the Eternal Land (Tokoyo); the second enters the ocean to follow his mother; and the third (Kamu Yamato Iware Hiko no Mikoto, Divine Yamato Iware Male Lord) becomes the first emperor of Yamato, Jinmu. From here on, the Kojiki *is divided into chapters of the succeeding imperial reigns.*

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Book 2

MOUNT MIWA

During the reign of Emperor Sujin, there was a great epidemic, and the people seemed to be on the verge of extinction. The emperor sorrowed and grieved and slept on a divine bed in order to receive an oracle. That night, the great deity Ōmono-nushi, Great Lord of Spirits, appeared to the emperor in a dream and said, "This epidemic is my will. If, however, you persuade Ōtataneko to worship before me, the divine wrath will be averted and the land will be peaceful and at ease." Thus messengers were dispatched urgently in all directions to find this person called Ōtataneko. He was found in the village of Mino in Kawachi and was presented to the emperor.

The emperor asked, "Whose child are you?" Ōtataneko replied that he was a descendant of the deity Great Lord of Spirits and Ikutama-yori-bime, the Lady Living Spirit Medium. Then the emperor rejoiced greatly, saying, "The realm will be peaceful, and the people will flourish."

Hence, with Ōtataneko serving as the chief priest, he worshiped the great deity of Great Miwa at the sacred mountain. Furthermore, the emperor commanded the making of many heavenly flat pots and designated the worship of the shrines of heavenly deities and earthly deities. To the deity of Sumi Pass in Uda he offered red shields and spears, and to the deity of the Ōsaka, the Great Pass, he offered black shields and spears. To all the deities of the hillsides and the deities of river rapids, he presented ceremonial offerings without fail. Because of this, the wrath of the epidemic ceased completely, and the country was peaceful and at ease.

The reason why this man called Ōtataneko is known to be a descendant of a deity is this: the aforementioned Lady Living Spirit Medium was a beauty. Once, a young man, whose form and dignity were without equal, came suddenly in the middle of night. They fell in love with each other and lived together as husband and wife. Before long, the lady became pregnant. Then her father and mother, thinking it strange that she should be pregnant, asked their daughter, "How is it that you became pregnant by yourself, without a husband?" She replied, "There is a lovely young man, whose name I do not know, who comes every evening. Living together with him, I naturally became pregnant."

At this, her father and mother, wishing to know who this man was, told their daughter, "Take red clay and scatter it by your bed, and thread a needle with a roll of hemp yarn, and sew it onto the hem of his clothing." So she did as she was told, and when they looked the next morning, the yarn attached to the needle had passed outside through the keyhole of the door, leaving only three loops (*miwa*). Having discovered how the man had left through the keyhole, they followed the yarn, which led to Mount Miwa and ended at the shrine of the deity. This is how it is known that Ōtataneko is a descendant of a deity. Hence, because of the three loops of yarn left, the place is called Miwa (Three Loops).

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YAMATO THE BRAVE

Emperor Keikō (traditional dates 71–130 C.E.) ruled from the Hishiro Palace at Makimuku (today Nara Prefecture). By his various consorts and concubines, he had eighty children; second and third among them were Prince Ō-usu (Big Mortar) and his younger brother Prince O-usu (Little Mortar). Prince O-usu became Yamato Takeru no Mikoto, or Prince Yamato the Brave. His story is unique in the *Kojiki* because even though he is only a prince (the emperor's son), the text treats him as if he were an emperor (his wife is styled as "empress"). His exploits against the "braves" of other lands (Kumaso, Izumo) appear to be an allegory for the Yamato clan's military expansion. Although Prince Yamato's almost supernatural might leads him to conquer and kill the gods of various lands, he meets a tragic end when he misspeaks a charm against a wild boar, who turns out to be the god of Mount Ibuki, and loses his power.

The emperor said to Prince Little Mortar: "Why does your elder brother not come to the morning and evening meals? Take it upon yourself to teach and admonish him." After this had been said, five days passed, but he still did not come. The emperor then asked Prince Little Mortar: "Why has your elder brother not come for such a long time? Is it perhaps that you have not yet admonished him?" He replied: "I have already entreated him." "In what manner did you entreat him?" He replied: "Early in the morning when he went into the privy, I waited and captured him, grasped him and crushed him, then pulled off his limbs and, wrapping them in a straw mat, threw them away."

At this, the emperor was terrified at the fearless, wild disposition of this prince and said: "Toward the west, there are two mighty men called the Kumaso Braves. They are unsubmissive, disrespectful people. Therefore go and kill them." Thus saying, he dispatched him. At this time, he was still a youth wearing his hair up on his forehead. Then Prince Little Mortar received from his aunt Princess Yamato an upper garment and a skirt and, with a small sword in his bosom, set out.

When he arrived at the house of the Kumaso Braves, he found that the home was surrounded by three rows of warriors and that they were building a pit dwelling and were inside it. At the time there was a great deal of noise about the coming feast to celebrate the new pit dwelling, and food was being prepared. Walking around the vicinity, he waited for the day of the feast. When that day arrived, he combed his hair down in the manner of a young girl's and put on the upper garment and the skirt of his aunt. Completely taking on a young girl's appearance, he mingled with the women and went into the dwelling.

Then the two Kumaso Braves, the elder and the younger, looked with admiration at this maiden and had her sit between them as the festivities continued. Then, when the feast was at its height, Prince Little Mortar took his sword from his bosom and, seizing the older Kumaso's collar, stabbed him clear through the chest. Then the younger Kumaso, seeing this, was afraid and ran out.

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Pursuing him to the foot of the stairs leading out of the pit dwelling, he seized him by the back, took the sword, and stabbed him clear through from the rear.

Then, the Kumaso Brave said: "Do not move the sword. I have something to say." The prince gave him a respite while holding him down. When asked, "Who are you, my lord?" the prince replied "I am the son of Emperor Oho-tarashi-hiko-oshiro-wake, who dwells in the palace of Hishiro and rules the Land of the Eight Islands; and my name is Prince Yamato-oguna. Hearing that you Kumaso Braves were unsubmissive and disrespectful, he dispatched me to kill you."

Then the Kumaso Brave said: "Indeed this must be true. For in the west there are no brave, mighty men besides us. But in the great land of Yamato there is a man exceeding the two of us in bravery! Because of this I will present you with a name. May you be known from now on as Prince Yamato the Brave." After he had finished saying this, the prince killed him, slicing him up like a ripe melon.

From that time, he was called Yamato Takeru, Yamato the Brave, to praise his name. Then as he returned, he subdued and pacified all the mountain deities, river deities, and deities of the sea straits.

At that time Yamato Takeru entered the land of Izumo. Intending to kill the Izumo Brave, he pledged friendship with him on his arrival. Then he secretly made an imitation sword of *itii* wood, which he wore at his side. They bathed together in the Hi River. At this time, Yamato Takeru came out of the river first and put on the sword that the Izumo Brave had worn, saying: "Let us exchange swords!" Then the Izumo Brave came out of the river and put on the imitation sword that Yamato Takeru had worn. Whereupon Yamato Takeru invited him, saying: "Come, let us cross swords!" As they were unsheathing their swords, the Izumo Brave was unable to unsheathe the imitation sword. Then Yamato Takeru, unsheathing his sword, struck and killed the Izumo Brave. Then he made a song, saying:

yatsumesasu	The many-clouds-rising
Izumo-take ga	Izumo Brave
hakeru tachi	wears a sword
tsuzura sawamaki	with many vines wrapped around it,
sami nashi ni aware	but no blade inside, alas!

Thus, having swept away and pacified his foes, he went up and reported on his mission.

Then the emperor once again commanded Yamato Takeru: "Subdue and pacify the unruly deities and the unsubmissive people of the twelve regions to the east!" He dispatched together with him the ancestor of the Omi of Kibi, whose name was Mi-suki-tomo-mimi-take-hiko, and bestowed on him a giant spear of *hihiragi* wood. Thus, when he received the command and set out, he went to the shrine of the Great Deity of Ise and worshiped at the court of the deity.

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Then he said to his aunt Princess Yamato: "Is it because the emperor wishes me to die soon? Why did he dispatch me to attack the evil people of the west? Then when I came back up, why did he dispatch me once more after only a short while, without giving me troops, to subdue the evil people of the twelve regions to the east? In view of all this, he must cause me to die soon." He lamented and wept.

On his departure, Princess Yamato gave him the sword Kusanagi, Grass Feller. She also gave him a bag and said: "Should there be an emergency, open this bag." Afterward, he arrived in the land of Owari and went into the house of Princess Miyazu, the ancestress of the governor of Owari. Although he wanted to marry her, he decided to marry her on his return. Thus promising, he proceeded to the eastern lands and subdued and pacified all the unruly deities and unsubmissive people of the mountains and rivers.

At that time, when he arrived in the land of Sagamu, the governor of that land deceived him, saying: "In this plain there is a great pond. In the pond there lives a deity who is an extremely unruly deity." Then when he went into the plain in order to see that deity, the governor set fire to the plain. Realizing that he had been deceived, he opened the bag given him by his aunt Princess Yamato, looked inside and found a fire-striking implement.

Then, first he mowed away the grass with his sword; then he lit a fire with the fire-striking implement and set a counterfire to keep the fire away. Then he went back out and killed the governor and all of his clan. Then he set fire to them and burned them. Today the place is therefore called Yakizu, Burning Ford.

From there he proceeded to cross the sea of Hashiri-mizu, Running Water. Just then the deity of the crossing stirred up the waves so that the boat went adrift and could not move forward. Then his empress, whose name was Princess Oto-tachibana, said: "I will go into the sea in your stead, O prince. You, O prince, must complete the mission entrusted to you and return to report on it." When she was about to go into the sea, they took many layers of sedge mats, many layers of skin carpets, and many layers of silk carpets and spread them out on top of the waves, and she went down onto them. At this time the rough waves of themselves became calm, and the boat was able to move forward. Then the empress sang this song:

sanesashi	O you, my lord, alas—
Sagamu no ono ni	you who once, standing among the flames
moyuru hi no	of the burning fire, spoke my name
honaka ni tachite	on the mountain-surrounded
toishi kimi wamo	Plain of Sagamu!

Seven days later, the empress's comb was washed ashore. Taking this comb, they made her tomb and placed it inside.

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From there he proceeded and subdued all of the unruly Emishi and pacified the unruly deities of the mountains and rivers. Then on his way back to the capital, he arrived at the foot of the pass of Ashi-gara, and just as he was eating his travel rations, the deity of the pass, assuming the form of a white deer, came and stood there. Then he took a piece of *hiru* plant left over from his meal and struck the deer. It hit the deer's eye and killed him.

Then he climbed up the pass and, grieving, sighed three times: "My wife, alas!" Therefore the name of the land is Azuma. Then he proceeded overland from that land to Kai. While he was there at the palace of Sakaori, he sang this song:

Niibari	How many nights have we slept
Tsukuba o sugite	since passing Niibari
ikuyo ka netsuru	and Tsukuba?

Then the old man tending the fire sang this song to continue his song:

kaga nabete	The number of days is, all together,
yo ni wa kokonoyo	of nights, nine,
hi ni wa tooka o	and of days, ten.

Then he rewarded the old man and made him the governor of the land of Azuma.

From that land he crossed over to the land of Shinano. There he subdued the deity of the Shinano pass and returned to the land of Owari. He entered the dwelling of Princess Miyazu with whom he had previously made a promise of marriage. At that time, when presenting his food, Princess Miyazu brought the great wine cup and presented it to him. But Princess Miyazu had menstrual blood staining the hem of her cloak. Noticing the menstrual blood, he sang this song:

Across the heavenly Kagu Mountain
the long-necked swan flies like a sharp sickle.
Your arm slender and delicate like the bird's neck—
although I wish to clasp it in my embrace,
although I desire to sleep with you,
on the hem of the cloak you are wearing
the moon has risen.

Then Princess Miyazu sang this song in reply:

O high-shining Sun Prince,
O my great lord ruling in peace!

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as the years one by one pass by,
the moons also one by one elapse.
It is no wonder that while waiting in vain for you,
on the cloak I am wearing the moon should rise.

Then they were conjugally united, and he, leaving his sword Kusanagi at Princess Miyazu's dwelling, went to take the deity of Mount Ibuki.

At this time he said, "I will take the deity of this mountain with my bare hands," and went up the mountain. Then on the mountain he met a white boar the size of a cow. Thereupon he spoke a charm, saying: "This is the deity's messenger, which is here transformed into a white boar. I will not kill it now but will kill it when I come back," and went up.

At this time the deity of the mountain caused a violent hailstorm and dazed Yamato Takeru. It was not the deity's messenger that had been transformed into the white boar but the deity itself. He was dazed because he had spoken a charm to it.[3]

Then he came back down the mountain; his mind awoke somewhat as he rested at the spring of Tama-kura-be. For that reason it is called Isame, Spring of Coming to the Senses. From there he set out, and arriving on the plain of Tagi, he said: "I had always thought in my heart of flying through the skies, but now my legs cannot walk; they have become wobbly." For this reason that place is called Tagi, Totter.

From there he proceeded a little farther and, because of his extreme fatigue, walked along slowly, using a staff. For this reason that place is called Walking-Stick Pass. When he arrived at the foot of the single pine on the Cape of Otsu, he found that a sword that he had left behind when he had eaten there had not disappeared but was still there. Then he sang this song:

Directly across from Owari,
on the Cape Otsu you stand,
O lone pine—O my brother!—
O lone pine, were you a man,
I would give you a sword to wear,
I would dress you with clothes,
O lone pine—O my brother!—

Proceeding from there, when he arrived at the village of Mie, he again said: "My legs are like a threefold curve, and I am extremely tired." For this reason that place is called Mie, Threefold.

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3. The charm was supposed to make Prince Yamato Takeru's words come true (that is, that he would indeed return and kill the boar). But it goes awry because the words spoken in the charm are mistaken: the boar is not the messenger but the god himself. It is the misspeaking of the charm that causes Prince Yamato to lose his power.

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From there he proceeded to the plain of Nobo, where he sang this song recalling his homeland:

> Yamato is the highest part of the land;
> the mountains are green partitions, lying layer upon layer.
> Nestled among the mountains,
> how beautiful is Yamato!

Again he sang:

> Let those whose life is secure
> take from Mount Heguri of the rush matting
> leaves of great oak and wear them in their hair
> —O my lads!—

These are "songs of yearning for the homeland." Again he sang:

> From the direction
> of my beloved home
> the clouds are rising.

This is a "half song." By this time his illness had become critical. Then he sang this song:

> Next to the maiden's
> sleeping place
> I left the saber, the sword—
> alas, that sword!

Immediately after he had sung the songs, he died. Then couriers were sent to the emperor.

At this time his empresses and children who were in Yamato came down to the plain of Nobo and constructed his tomb. Then, crawling around the neighboring rice paddies, they sang while weeping:

> The vines of the *tokoro*
> crawl around
> among the rice stems,
> the rice stems in the rice paddies
> bordering on the tomb.

At this time he was transformed into a giant white bird and, soaring through the skies, flew away toward the beach. Then the wives and children, although

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their feet had been cut by the stumps of the bamboo reeds, forgot the pain and ran after the bird, weeping. At this time they sang this song:

> Moving with difficulty, up to our waists
> in the field of low bamboo stalks,
> we cannot go through the skies—
> but alas, must go by foot!

Again, when they waded into the sea and moved through the waves with difficulty, they sang:

> Going by sea, waist deep in the water,
> we move forward with difficulty;
> like plants growing by a large river,
> we drift aimlessly in the ocean currents.

Again, when the bird had flown to the rocky shores, they sang:

> The plover of the beach
> does not go by the beaches,
> but follows along the rocky shores.

These four songs were sung at his funeral. For this reason, even today these songs are sung at the funeral of an emperor. From that land the bird flew away and stopped at Shiki in the land of Kōchi. For this reason they built his tomb at that place and enshrined him there. This tomb is called the White Bird Tomb. But from that place the bird again soared through the heavens and flew away. During the entire time that Yamato Takeru went about subduing the country, the ancestor of the Atae of the Kume, whose name was Nana-tsuka-hagi, served in his company as his food server.

[Adapted from a translation by Donald Philippi]

NIHON SHOKI (*CHRONICLES OF JAPAN*, 720)

The *Nihon shoki* (*Chronicles of Japan*), also referred to as the *Nihongi*, is the first official history of Japan, the first of the so-called *Six State Histories* (*Rikkokushi*). Like the *Kojiki*, it describes the foundation of Japan from the mythological genealogy of the creation gods, through the myth of heavenly descent, to the genealogy of human emperors. The first two volumes are devoted to the age of the gods (*kami no yo*); the third volume is a record of the first emperor Jinmu's reign; and the subsequent volumes cover the reigns of successive emperors up through the Jinshin war (672) and the reigns of Emperor Tenmu (r. 672–686) and Empress Jitō (r. 687–696). The compilation of the *Nihon shoki*

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may have begun during the reign of Emperor Tenmu, but it was not completed until 720, during the reign of his granddaughter Empress Genshō (r. 715–723). According to the second state history, the *Shoku Nihongi* (*Chronicles of Japan Continued*, ca. 797), the final compiler of the *Nihon shoki* was one of Tenmu's sons, Prince Toneri.

The *Nihon shoki* differs from the *Kojiki* in several important respects. The first difference is its official status. It also is ten times longer and much more comprehensive. Whereas the *Kojiki* is a record of only "ancient" matters, the *Nihon shoki* account goes right up to the recent past (the reigns of Tenmu and Jitō). Moreover, in contrast to the *Kojiki*, which presents a single unified account, the age of the gods volumes of the *Nihon shoki* offer numerous versions of several key mythological episodes. Each variant is preceded by the phrase "In one writing it is said" and is written in smaller characters, indicating that the variant is subordinate to the main text. Thus, while the *Nihon shoki* offers an official version of the myths, it also is concerned with the compilation of variant versions. In several key mythical episodes, the *Nihon shoki*'s main text differs considerably from that of the *Kojiki*. In particular, whereas the driving force behind creation in the *Kojiki* is the spontaneous creative force known as *musuhi*, in the *Nihon shoki* myths it is the interaction between the forces of yin and yang that create the universe. Related to this is the fact that in the *Nihon shoki* mythology, Izanami does not die (as she does in the *Kojiki*), since as the embodiment of yin, she has to create the world together with her companion Izanagi (the embodiment of yang).

For its historical volumes (records of the sovereigns), the *Nihon shoki* draws on numerous sources, including Chinese dynastic histories, records compiled by Korean immigrants to Japan, histories of temples (*engi*), and various local clan histories. All these are integrated into a genealogical plot describing the divine origins and various exploits of the rulers of "Nihon" (Japan). In contrast to the *Kojiki*, which is written in an experimental hybrid style of writing, the *Nihon shoki* is written in orthodox classical Chinese style (*kanbun*). Closely related to this issue of writing is the fact that one objective of the *Nihon shoki* was to place Japan into a larger East Asian context, as a legitimate empire with tributary barbarian states, to rival the Chinese Tang dynasty, in theory if not in fact. Except for the first two volumes on the age of the gods, all the subsequent volumes of the *Nihon shoki* record the history of the emperors according to the Chinese cosmological calendar. The title echoes that of two Chinese histories: the *Kanjo* (*Han History*) and the *Gokanjo* (*Later Han History*).

Age of the Gods

UKEMOCHI

The two gods Izanagi and Izanami give birth to the land, sea, and rivers, and then to Amaterasu (Sun Goddess), Tsukuyomi (god of the moon), and Susano-o. The

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following passage is a variant of the main text, which tells the story of the earth god Ukemochi and how the sun and the moon came to be separated.

In one writing, it is said: "The God Izanagi charged his three children, saying, 'Do Great Goddess Amaterasu, rule over the Plain of High Heaven; do God Tsukuyomi, be associated with her in the charge of Heavenly Matters; do God Susano-o, govern the plain of the Ocean.'

"Now when Amaterasu was in Heaven, she said: 'I hear that in the Central Country of Reed Plains there is the deity Ukemochi. Do Tsukuyomi, go and wait upon her.' On receiving this command, Tsukuyomi descended and went to the place where Ukemochi was. Then Ukemochi turned her head toward the land, and out of her mouth came boiled rice: she faced the sea, and again there came from her mouth things broad of fin and narrow of fin. She faced the mountains, and again there came from her mouth things rough of hair and smooth of hair. All these things were prepared and set out on one hundred tables for his entertainment.

"Then Tsukuyomi became flushed with anger, and said: 'Filthy! Nasty! That you should dare to feed me with things disgorged from your mouth.' So he drew his sword and slew her and then returned and made his report, relating all the circumstances. Amaterasu was exceedingly angry at this and said: 'You are a wicked deity. I must not see you face to face.' So they were separated by one day and one night, and dwelled apart.

"After this Amaterasu sent Ama no kumabito to go to see her. By this time Ukemochi already was dead. But on the crown of her head there had been produced an ox and a horse; on the top of her forehead there had been produced millet; over her eyebrows there had been produced silkworms; in her eyes there had been produced panic [grass]; in her belly there had been produced rice; and in her genitals there had been produced wheat, large beans, and small beans.

"Ama no kumabito picked up all these things and delivered them to Amaterasu, who rejoiced and said: 'These are the things that the race of visible[4] humans will eat and live on.' So she made the millet, the panic, the wheat, and the beans the seed for the dry fields, and the rice she made the seed for the wet fields. Therefore she appointed a village chief of heaven and sowed for the first time the rice seed in the narrow fields and the long fields of heaven. That autumn, drooping ears bent down eight-span long and were exceedingly pleasant to look at.

"In addition, she took the silkworms in her mouth and succeeded in reeling thread from them. From this began the art of silkworm rearing."

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4. As opposed to the invisible gods.

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Records of the Sovereigns

THE EMPRESS AND HER BROTHER PRINCE SAHOBIKO

This story is from the record of Suinin, the eleventh sovereign. In the marital system of the ancient Japanese aristocracy, in which the husband commuted to his wife's house or lived in her house, the bond between a married woman and her siblings remained very strong, since they continued to belong to the same house. In the case of the emperors, although having multiple wives enabled them to form alliances with different families, it also exposed them to various plots. Here the elder brother of the empress suggests to his sister that together, as a pair, they could rule the country. In contrast to the *Kojiki* version, in which the empress deliberately attempts to kill the emperor with a small sword, in this version she makes no such attempt and instead is caught in a tragic bind.

Fourth year, autumn, Ninth Month, twenty-third day. The empress's elder maternal brother, Prince Sahobiko, plotted treason and tried to endanger the state. He watched for an occasion when the empress was enjoying her leisure and addressed her as follows: "Whom do you love best—your elder brother or your husband?"

At this, the empress, ignorant of his object in making this inquiry, immediately answered, saying: "I love my elder brother." Then he enticed the empress by saying: "If one serves a man by beauty, when the beauty fades, his affection will cease. There now are many beautiful women in the empire. They will come one after the other and seek affection. How, then, can you always trust in your beauty? It is my wish, therefore, to ascend to the immense felicity and be certain to rule the empire along with you. So making high our pillows, we shall complete a long hundred years. Would this not be delightful? I beg you, therefore, to slay the emperor for me." So he took a dagger and, giving it to the empress, said: "Put on this dagger with your garments, and when the emperor goes to sleep, stab him in the neck and kill him."

At this the empress trembled inside in her heart and did not know what she should do. But in view of the determination of the prince, her elder brother, she felt that remonstrance would be useless. Therefore she took the dagger, and having herself nowhere else to put it, she placed it in her garments, intending all the while to remonstrate with her elder brother.

Fifth year, winter, Tenth Month, first day. The emperor proceeded to Kume, where he dwelled in Takamiya. Now the emperor took his noon-day nap with the empress's knees as his pillow. Up to this time the empress had done nothing but thought vainly to herself: "This would be the time to do what the prince, my elder brother, plotted." And she wept tears which fell on the emperor's face.

The emperor woke and addressed the empress, saying: "Today we have had a dream. A small brocade-color snake coiled itself around our neck and a great rain arose from Saho, which coming here wet our faces. What does this

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portend?" At this the empress, knowing that she could not conceal the plot, in fear and awe bowed to the earth and informed the emperor fully of the circumstances of the prince's, her elder brother's, treason. Accordingly she addressed him, saying: "Your handmaiden was unable to resist the purpose of the prince, her elder brother, and yet could not be false to the gratitude due to the emperor. If I confessed, I would destroy the prince, my elder brother. If I said nothing, I would overturn the temples of the earth and of grain, so that on the one hand there was fear and, on the other, there was grief. Whether I looked up or down there was lamentation; whether I advanced or retired there was weeping and wailing. Night and day I was disturbed in mind and could find no way to give information. Only today when Your Majesty went to sleep with his handmaiden's knee as a pillow, she thought: 'If I were mad enough to accomplish the purpose of my elder brother, at this very time the deed could be done without difficulty.' With this thought still in my mind, the tears flowed spontaneously. So I raised my sleeve to wipe away the tears, and they overflowed from the sleeve and moistened Your Majesty's face. Therefore the dream of today must have been an effect of this thing. The small brocade-color snake is nothing other than the dagger that was given to me; the great rain that arose suddenly is nothing else than thy handmaiden's tears."

Then the emperor addressed the empress, saying: "This is not your crime," and raising a force from the neighboring district, he commanded Yatsunada, the remote ancestor of the Kimi of Kōzuke, to slay Sahobiko. Now Sahobiko withstood him with an army and, hastily piling up rice stalks, made a castle, which was so solid that it could not be breached. This is what was called a "rice castle." A month passed, and yet it did not surrender.

The empress grieved at this, saying: "Even though I am empress, with what countenance can I preside over the empire, after bringing to ruin the prince, my elder brother?" Accordingly, she took in her arms the imperial prince Homutsu-wake and entered the rice castle of the prince, her elder brother. The emperor increased his army still more and, having surrounded the castle on all sides, proclaimed to those inside, saying: "Send forth quickly the empress and the imperial prince." But they would not send them out. So General Yatsunada set fire to the castle. Then the empress, taking in her bosom the imperial child, crossed the castle and came out.

Immediately she sought the emperor, saying: "The reason why your handmaiden at first fled into her elder brother's castle was in the hope that her elder brother might be absolved from guilt for the sake of her and her child. But now he has not been absolved, and I know that I am guilty. Shall I have my hands tied behind my back? There is nothing left but for me to strangle myself. But even though I, your handmaiden, die, I cannot bear to forget the favor shown me by the emperor. I pray, therefore, that the empress's palace, which I had charge of, may be granted to consorts for you. In the land of Tanba there are five ladies, all of virtuous minds, the daughters of the prince, who is Michi no

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Ushi of Tanba. Let them be placed in the side courts to complete the number of the consort chambers." To this the emperor agreed. Then the fire blazed up, and the castle was destroyed. All the troops ran away, and Sahobiko and his younger sister died together inside the castle. Thereupon the emperor commended the good service of General Yatsunada and granted him the name of Yamato-hi-muke-hiko Yatsunada.

[Adapted from a translation by W. G. Aston]

ANCIENT SONGS (*KODAI KAYŌ*)

The term "ancient songs" refers mainly to the songs and poems included in the *Kojiki* (712) and the *Nihon shoki* (720), as well as in other texts such as the fudoki and the *Kinkafu*, a collection of twenty-one songs compiled in the early Heian period. The *Kojiki* contains 112 songs, and the *Nihon shoki*, 128 songs. In these early chronicles the songs appear in a narrative context, as forms of elevated speech representing the thoughts and words of specific gods or historical figures. Some of these songs probably existed, however, as independent songs before they were used by the editors of these early chronicles. Many of the same songs, with small variations, appear in both the *Kojiki* and the *Nihon shoki*.

About half the songs in the *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki* are in a thirty-one-syllable *tanka* (short poem) form, in a 5/7/5/7/7 syllabic pattern. The next most popular form is the irregular *chōka* (long poem), which consists of alternating short and long lines with an irregular number of syllables. One characteristic feature of the early songs is the frequent repetition of the same line to heighten the effect. In some cases, when two poems form a question-and-answer (*mondō*) pattern, the response repeats a line from the previous song. A related feature is the common use of parallelism in structure and content, with many refrains and exclamatory particles. The *makurakotoba* (pillow word or poetic epithet), which usually consists of five syllables, is a formulaic epithet that modifies a specific word. These pillow words appear often, as do puns and plays on words. The ancient songs have been divided by scholars into various subgenres, such as land-viewing songs, courtship and marriage songs, songs of praise, and palace songs.

The God Yachihoko

In the courtship songs from the *Kojiki* (nos. 2 and 3), the god Yachihoko, or Eight Thousand Spears, another name for the god Ōkuni-nushi (a descendant of the god Susano-o), goes to the land of Koshi (later Echizen, Etchū, and Echigo Provinces) in search of a suitable mate. The term "wise woman" (*sakashi me*) and other laudatory phrases indicate that she is the highest female god in the land of Koshi. The song shifts from the third person in the first section to the first person (and sometimes back to the third person) in the remainder, giving the perspective of the god himself. This

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courtship song also is categorized as a "god narration" (*kami-gatari*) song, since it is narrated by a god.

The god Yachihoko went forth to woo Princess Nunakawa of the land of Koshi. When he arrived at her house, he sang:

Yachihoko no	The god
kami no mikoto wa	Yachihoko,
yashima kuni	unable to find a wife
tsuma makikanete	in the land of the eight islands,
tōtōshi	hearing that
Koshi no kuni no	in the faraway
sakashi-me o	land of Koshi
ari to kikashite	there was a wise maiden,
kuwashi-me o	hearing that
ari to kikashite	there was a fair maiden,
sayobai ni	set out
aritatashi	to woo her,
yobai ni	went out
arikayowase	to win her.
tachi ga o mo	Not even untying
imada tokazute	the cord of my sword,
osuhi o mo	not even untying
imada tokaneba	my cloak,
otome no	I stood there
nasu ya itato o	and pushed and shook,
osoburai	I stood there
wa ga tatasereba	and pulled and shoved
hikozurai	on the wooden door
wa ga tatasereba	where the maiden slept.
aoyama ni	Then, on the verdant mountains,
nue wa nakinu	the *nue* bird sang.
sanotsutori	The bird of the field,
sagishi wa toyomu	the pheasant resounded.
niwatsutori	The bird of the yard,
kake wa naku	the cock crowed.
uretaku mo	Ah how hateful
naku naru tori ka	these birds for crying!
kono tori mo	Would that I could make them
uchiyamekosene	stop their accursed singing!

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ishitau ya	These are
amahasezukai	the words,
koto no	the words handed down
katarigoto mo	by the heavenly messenger.
ko oba	

The next song is Princess Nunakawa's reply.

Yachihoko no	Oh god
kami no mikoto	Yachihoko!
nuekusa no	Since I am but a woman,
tsuma ni shi areba	supple like the pliant grass,
wa ga kokoro	my heart is all aflutter
urasu no tori zo	like the birds of the seashore.
ima kosoba	Although now I may be
wadori ni arame	a free, selfish bird of my own,
nochi wa	later, I shall be yours,
nadori ni aramu o	a bird ready to submit to your will.
inochi wa	Therefore, my lord, be patient;
na shisetamai so	do not die of love.

ishitau ya	These are
amahasezukai	the words,
koto no	the words handed down
katarigoto mo	by the heavenly messenger . . .
ko oba	

The Palace of Hishiro

The following song, also from the *Kojiki* (no. 100), from the reign of Emperor Yūryaku, is the longest poem in the chronicles. The pretext for the song is a leaf that one of the emperor's *uneme*, a beautiful woman sent to court from the provinces as tribute to the emperor, has inadvertently let drop in the emperor's wine cup. The uneme sings the song in order to convince Emperor Yūryaku to spare her life. She begins by praising the palace, using repetitive phrases. The Hall of New Grain is described as the most splendid part of the palace along with the *tsuki* tree, a kind of tree of the cosmos, whose branches encompass heaven and all the emperor's lands. (The Hall of New Grain was a building used for the most important winter event, the New Grain, or Niiname, festival.) The leaf of the tsuki tree finally comes to rest in a liquor cup, "as floating oil / into a beautiful jeweled cup," an image that echoes the mythic creation of heaven and earth (Onogoro Island) and the creation of the land in both

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the *Kojiki* and the *Nihon shoki*. A note after the song says that it is a "heavenly transmitted song" (*amagatari-uta*), stressing that the song was faithfully transmitted at court.

Emperor Yūryaku was holding a feast underneath a luxuriant *tsuki* tree at Hatsuse. A *uneme* court lady of Mie in the land of Ise presented the emperor's wine cup. Unknown to her, a leaf of the *tsuki* tree had fallen into the wine cup that she gave to the emperor. The emperor was enraged and was about to kill the uneme when she said: "Do not kill me; I have something to say." Then she sang this song.

Makimuku no	The palace of Hishiro
Hishiro no miya wa	at Makimuku
asahi no	is a palace where shines
hideru miya	the morning sun,
yūhi no	is a palace where is brilliant
hikageru miya	the evening sun,
take no ne no	is a palace where the roots
nedaru miya	of the bamboo are plentiful and abundant,
ko no ne no	is a palace where the roots
nebau miya	of the trees are long and extended,
yaoniyoshi	is a palace built
ikizuki no miya	pounding much foundation soil.
maki saku	By the palace of wood
hi no mikado	of flourishing *hi* trees,
Niinaeya ni	the Hall of New Grain,
oidateru	there is growing
momodaru	a luxuriant
tsuki ga e wa	*tsuki* tree:
hotsue wa	its upper branches
ame o oeri	spread out covering the heavens;
nakatsue wa	its middle branches
azuma o oeri	spread out covering the eastern lands;
shizue wa	its lower branches
hina o oeri	spread out covering the country regions.
Hotsue no	The leaves at the tip
e no uraba wa	of the upper branches
nakatsue ni	touch down
ochifurabae	on the middle branches;
nakatsue no	the leaves at the tip
e no uraba wa	of the middle branches
shimotsue ni	touch down

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ochifurabae	on the lower branches;
shizue no	the leaves at the tip
e no uraba wa	of the lower branches
arikinu no	drop, as floating oil,
Mie no ko ga	into a beautiful jeweled cup
sasagaseru	presented
mizutama uki ni	by the girl of Mie
ukishi abura	of the silken garments—
ochinazusai	and falling into the liquid,
mina kōro kōro ni	the waters churning,
	churning around:
ko shi mo	this, too—
aya ni kashikoshi	how awesome,
takahikaru	O high-shining
hi no miko	Prince of the Sun.
koto no	These are
katarigoto mo	the words,
ko oba	the words handed down.

And so, when she had presented this song, he forgave her offense.

[Adapted from translations by Donald Philippi]

PROVINCIAL GAZETTEERS (*FUDOKI*)

The *fudoki* (literally, "records of wind and earth"), or provincial gazetteers, were the result of an order from the council of state (*daijōkan*) in the eighth century, ordering all the provinces (of which there were more than sixty) to produce local records. Almost all these fudoki have now been lost. Only one complete fudoki (from Izumi Province) and four partial ones (from Hitachi, Hizen, Bungo, and Harima) remain. Hizen and Bungo are in Kyushu; Hitachi is in the present-day Ibaraki Prefecture; and Harima is in the present-day Hyōgo Prefecture.

According to an entry for 713 in the *Shoku Nihongi* (ca. 797), the fudoki were supposed to record the names of villages and the products of those villages; to note whether the farms were productive; to write down the origin of the names of the mountains, rivers, and fields; and to preserve old legends or unusual stories passed down by old people. The editors and authors of the fudoki are unknown, although they might have been provincial governors and local writers. The *Harima fudoki* is written in a Japanese-style kanbun similar to that of the *Kojiki*, and the *Hitachi fudoki* and *Bungo fudoki* are written in orthodox Chinese in the parallel prose style of the Six Dynasties.

The fudoki contain a number of anecdotes (*setsuwa*), including stories about the origins of provincial place-names. Since the spirit of each province

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(*kuni-dama*) was believed to be embodied in its name, the compilation of knowledge about the names of the various provinces was a symbolic way of controlling the province's spirit and subjugating it to the power of the emperor. For this reason, the names of provincial places were recited during the imperial accession ceremony (*daijōsai*), and the compilation of stories of the origins of place-names was thus an important part of the centralization of power.

HITACHI PROVINCE GAZETTEER (*HITACHI FUDOKI*)

The God of Tsukuba

"The God of Tsukuba" narrates the story of the origin of the festival celebrating the god at Mount Tsukuba (Tsukuha) (in Ibaraki Prefecture, north of present-day Tokyo). The celebration of the sacred mountain was a fertility ritual, because Mount Tsukuba had a male peak and a female peak, and it was believed that a male and a female deity lived here together. One consequence was that the seasonal festivals called *kagai* (songfests, or *utagaki*, as they were called in the Yamato area)—in which young men and women would exchange songs and court each other before pairing off to sleep together—were held on Mount Tsukuba. The story links the origin of the songfest with the origin of the rice or grain harvest festival, which was held at the court in the Eleventh Month but was a local custom as well.

The old people say that once the ancestor deity made a round of visits to the various gods. He arrived at Mount Fuji in Suruga Province just at nightfall and asked for lodging for the night. But the god of Mount Fuji answered, saying, "It is the first tasting of the early grain, and the house is taboo. This one day I cannot admit you."

At this the ancestor deity wept with vexation and cursed him, saying, "How is it that you do not give lodging to your parent? As long as you live, on the mountain where you dwell snow and frost shall fall winter and summer, cold shall pile upon cold, the people shall not climb up, and there shall be none to make offerings of food and drink."

Then he climbed Mount Tsukuba and again asked for lodging. This time the god of Tsukuba replied, saying, "Tonight is the tasting of the new grain, but how could I dare refuse your request?" And he prepared food and drink and waited on him respectfully. Thereupon the ancestor deity sang:

Hashiki kamo	Oh, well beloved,
wa ga ko	my progeny,
takaki kamo	oh, lofty,
kamumiya	shrine of gods!
ame tsuchi no muta	Even with heaven and earth,
hi tsuki no muta	together with sun and moon,

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tamikusa tsudoikotohoki	the people shall gather to celebrate
oshimono yutaka ni	with food and drink abundant,
yoyo ni tayuru koto naku	age after age never failing,
hi ni ke ni iyasakaemu	day after day more flourishing:
chiyo yorozuyo ni	for a thousand autumns and ten thousand years
tanoshibi kiwamaraji	their sports and pleasures never spent.

It is because of this that snow is forever falling on Mount Fuji, making it impossible to climb, whereas on Mount Tsukuba the gathering in throngs, the songs and the dancing, the drinking and feasting, have never ceased to this very day.

Pine Grove of Young Lovers

The tragic love story "Pine Grove of Young Lovers" occurs at a *kagai* (songfest) that was held once or twice a year. The kagai takes place just south of Karuno village, on a riverbank, near present-day Kashima village in Ibaraki Prefecture. Like Mount Tsukuba, the riverbank was a ritual site for celebrating fertility. Such festivals (celebrations of the gods) were held only at night and ended with the arrival of light. The narrative thus mythologizes the severity of the rules regarding the kagai. Note that the man and woman are not normal human beings but youths in the service of the gods. The strands of barken cloth (*yuu*) are offerings for the gods. In fact, the two youths probably represent a male god and a female god worshiped locally, and the story is about their origins.

To the south is the pine grove of Unai. Long ago there were a young boy and girl. (They are commonly referred to as the god-youth and the god-maiden.) The boy was called the Youth of Samuta of Naka, and the girl was named the Maiden of Aze of Unakami. Both were handsome in form and feature, the radiant blossoms of their villages. They heard of each other's fame and conceived the same desire; their reserve vanished. Months went by, days piled up; they would meet by chance at songfest gatherings. (These are commonly called *utagaki* or *kagai*.) Once the youth sang:

Iyazeru no	Ever more boldly
Aze no komatsu ni	flourishing before my gaze,
yuu shidete	strands of barken cloth
wa o furumiyu mo	trail from the small pine of Aze:
Azekoshima wa mo	oh, Aze the little isle!

The maiden sang in reply:

Ushio wa	He said he would stand
tatamu to iedo	steadfast in the line of tide,

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nase no ko ga	but that lad of mine
yasoshimagakuri	spots me amid eighty isles
wa no mi sabashiri	hidden, and comes a-running.

At this point they wanted to talk but were afraid people would know. And so they left the festival grounds and hid under the pines. Hand in hand and knee aligned with knee, they poured out their hearts and confessed their passion. Once they had released the accumulated humors of their old longing, they broke into repeated smiles at their new happiness. It was the time of jade dew on the twigs, the season of metal wind shearing through trees. Off to the west, where the lambent, glistening cinnamon moon shone down, lay the sandbar destination of the raucous cranes; off to the east, where the ruffling, gusting autumn breeze sang cool in the pines, stood the coppiced hill crossed by the wild geese. The mountain was still and lone, the rock spring old; night moaned sere, and the smoky frost was new.

The nearby mountain drew their gaze to the color of yellow leaves scattering in the woods; the distant sea let them hear only the voice of blue waves thundering on the rocks. To be together in this place tonight: pleasure beyond all pleasure. They were utterly lost in the sweetness of their colloquy and completely forgot that night would soon be over. Suddenly cocks were crowing, dogs were barking—dawn was in the sky, and the day was bright. Caught by surprise, the young couple did not know what to do. Finally, ashamed to be discovered, they changed into pine trees. The youth they called the Wave-Hidden Pine, and the maiden, Pine Shavings. These names were given long ago and have never been altered to the present day.

[Translated by Edwin Cranston]

PRAYERS TO THE GODS (*NORITO*)

Norito are prayers offered to a god or gods at a ceremony at the imperial court or at a shrine. Twenty-seven norito from the ancient period survive in the eighth volume (devoted to the activities of the Office of Rites, or Jingikan) of the *Engi shiki* (927), a compilation of legal regulations intended to amplify the basic laws contained in the ritsuryō codes. The word *nori* is related to the verbs *noru* (to speak) and *inoru* (to pray), and *to* may mean "place," "word," or "magic." As a general term, *norito* probably means magic by means of words. Typically, the norito start with an address to the priests, the royalty, and/or the officials before whom the norito is presented. Next the sponsor or the sovereign is mentioned, followed by praise of the god's name and his accomplishments and a narration of the origins of the ritual as well as a description of the offerings and the ritual itself. At the end, a request is made of the god that the ritual bring peace, bounty, or safety to the people or the sovereign. Some of the prominent techniques are repetition, parallelism, long enumerations of names of deities and offerings,

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metaphors, and the use of mythological accounts to explain the origin of certain forms of worship.

GREAT EXORCISM OF THE LAST DAY OF THE SIXTH MONTH (MINAZUKI TSUGOMORI NO ŌHARAE)

The following is a prayer of exorcism read at the Great Exorcism (Ōharae) held twice a year on the last days of the Sixth and Twelfth Months, at the Suzaku-mon, the main gate to the imperial palace, where princes, nobility, and officials of lesser rank gathered for the ceremony. The purpose of both the norito and the ceremony was to remove all sins from the country. All the sins of the nobles, courtiers, and palace functionaries were rubbed off onto the "sin bearers": the "heavenly narrow pieces of wood" and the "heavenly sedge reeds," which were then thrown into the river. The norito was spoken or read by either a Nakatomi or a Urabe diviner. This notion of a surrogate "sin bearer" figures prominently in later works like *The Tale of Genji*.

Hear me, all of you assembled princes of the blood, princes, court nobles,
and all officials. Thus I speak.
The various sins perpetrated and committed
by those who serve in the Emperor's court,
the scarf-wearing women attendants,
the sash-wearing men attendants,
the quiver-bearing guard attendants,
the sword-bearing guard attendants,
as well as all those who serve in various offices—
These sins are to be exorcised, are to be purified
in the great exorcism of the last day of the Sixth Month of this year—
Hear me, all of you. Thus I speak.
By the command of the Sovereign Ancestral Gods and Goddesses,
who divinely remain in the High Heavenly Plain,
the eight myriad deities were convoked in a divine convocation,
consulted in a divine consultation,
and spoke these words of entrusting:
"Our Sovereign Grandchild is to rule
the Land of the Plentiful Reed Plains of the Fresh Ears of Grain
tranquilly as a peaceful land."
Having thus entrusted the land,
they inquired with a divine inquiry
of the unruly deities of the land,
and expelled them with a divine expulsion;
they silenced to the last leaf
the rocks and the stumps of the trees,
which had been able to speak,

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and caused him to descend from the heavens,
leaving the heavenly rock seat,
and pushing with an awesome pushing
through the myriad layers of heavenly clouds—
thus they entrusted the land to him.
The lands of the four quarters thus entrusted,
Great Yamato, the Land of the Sun-Seen-on-High,
was pacified and made a peaceful land;
the palace posts were firmly planted on the bedrock below,
the crossbeams soaring high toward the High Heavenly Plain,
and the noble palace of the Sovereign Grandchild constructed,
where, as a heavenly shelter, as a sun shelter, he dwells hidden,
and rules the kingdom tranquilly as a peaceful land.
The various sins perpetrated and committed
by the ever-increasing people to come into existence
in this land which he is to rule tranquilly as a peaceful land:
First, the heavenly sins:
breaking down the ridges,
covering up the ditches,
releasing the irrigation sluices,
double planting,
setting up stakes,
skinning alive, skinning backward,
defecation—
many sins such as these are distinguished and called the heavenly sins.
The earthly sins:
cutting living flesh, cutting dead flesh,
white leprosy, skin excrescences,
the sin of violating one's own mother,
the sin of violating one's own child,
the sin of violating a mother and her child,
the sin of violating a child and her mother,
the sin of transgression with animals,
woes from creeping insects,
woes from the deities of on high,
woes from the birds of on high,
killing animals, the sin of witchcraft—
many sins such as these shall appear.
When they thus appear,
by the heavenly shrine usage,
let the Great Nakatomi cut off the bottom and cut off the top
of heavenly narrow pieces of wood,
and place them in abundance on a thousand tables;

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let him cut off the bottom and cut off the top
of heavenly sedge reeds
and cut them up into myriad strips;
and let him pronounce the heavenly ritual, the solemn ritual words.
When he thus pronounces them,
the heavenly deities will push open the heavenly rock door,
and pushing with an awesome pushing
through the myriad layers of heavenly clouds,
will hear and receive these words.
Then the earthly deities will climb up
to the summits of the high mountains and to the summits of the low mountains,
and pushing aside the mists of the high mountains and the mists of the low mountains,
will hear and receive these words.
When they thus hear and receive,
then, beginning with the court of the Sovereign Grandchild,
in the lands of the four quarters under the heavens,
each and every sin will be gone.
As the gusty wind blows apart the myriad layers of heavenly clouds;
as the morning mist, the evening mist is blown away by the morning wind, the evening wind;
as the large ship anchored in the spacious port is untied at the prow and untied at the stern
and pushed out into the great ocean;
as the luxuriant clump of trees on yonder hill
is cut away at the base with a tempered sickle, a sharp sickle—
as a result of the exorcism and the purification,
there will be no sins left.
They will be taken into the great ocean
by the goddess called Lady Seori,
who dwells in the rapids of the rapid-running rivers
which fall surging perpendicular
from the summits of the high mountains and the summits of the low mountains.
When she thus takes them,
they will be swallowed with a gulp
by the goddess called Lady Hayaaki,
who dwells in the wild brine, the myriad currents of the brine,
in the myriad meeting-place of the brine of the many briny currents.
When she thus swallows them with a gulp,
the deity called Lord of Ibukido,

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who dwells in Ibukido, the Place of Blowing,
will blow them away with his breath to the land of Hades, the underworld.
When he thus blows them away,
the deity called Lady Hayasasura,
who dwells in the land of Hades, the underworld,
will wander off with them and lose them.
When she thus loses them,
beginning with the many officials serving in the Emperor's court,
in the four quarters under the heavens,
beginning from today,
each and every sin will be gone.
Holding the horses,
which stand listening,
pricking up their ears toward the High Heavenly Plain,
hear me, all of you:
know that all of the sins have been exorcised and purified
in the great exorcism performed in the waning of the evening sun
on the last day of the Sixth Month of the year. Thus I speak.
Oh diviners of the four lands,
carry them out to the great river
and cast them away. Thus I speak.

[Translated by Donald Philippi]

MAN'YŌSHŪ
(*COLLECTION OF MYRIAD LEAVES*, CA. 785)

The *Man'yōshū* (*Collection of Myriad Leaves*), Japan's oldest anthology of poetry, consists of twenty volumes containing more than 4,500 poems (*uta*), most of which were composed between the mid-seventh and the mid-eighth century. The *Man'yōshū* appears to have been edited in several stages by different people over seventy or eighty years. The first half of volume 1 was probably compiled at the beginning of the eighth century, and the first sixteen volumes had been written by 744. The finished product was probably completed between 770 and 785.

The three main poetic categories of the *Man'yōshū* are *zōka*, *sōmon*, and *banka*. *Zōka* eventually came to mean "miscellaneous poems," but originally it may have meant something like "public poems." *Sōmon* literally means "exchanges" and includes poems about love as well as (but to a far lesser extent) interpersonal and family relationships. *Banka* literally means "coffin-pulling songs" and originally referred to poems that were recited at the site of the temporary burial of emperors and princes. When this ritual practice was replaced by cremation at the end of the seventh century, the category of *banka* came to refer to poems about death in a more general sense. The terms *banka*

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and *zōka* are poetic categories in the *Wen xuan* (*Monzen*), a noted Chinese anthology of poetry. *Sōmon* was not a poetic category in China but existed as a poetic term meaning "exchange."

The two main poetic forms of the *Man'yōshū* are the *tanka* (short poem) and the *chōka* (long poem). When a tanka is placed after a chōka, it is sometimes referred to as a *hanka* (envoy). The tanka consists of five metric units, or *ku* (measures), in a 5/7/5/7/7 syllable pattern. The chōka, which can be of various lengths, alternates between measures of five and seven syllables, closing with three measures usually in a 5/7/7 syllable pattern. Some of the early chōka in the *Man'yōshū*, however, follow a short-measure/long-measure pattern, without strict syllable measures. Most of the poems in the *Man'yōshū* are tanka, with the chōka form tending to be composed by specialized poets on specific themes. Two other forms are the *sedōka* (head-turning poem), with a pattern of 5/7/7/5/7/7, of which there are sixty-two examples, and the *bussokuseki-ka* (Buddhist stone poem), with a pattern of 5/7/5/7/7/7, of which there is only one poem in the anthology.

The main rhetorical figures of the poetry of the *Man'yōshū* are the *makurakotoba* (pillow word), the *jokotoba* (preface phrase), and the *tsuiku* (binary measures). Makurakotoba, usually consisting of five syllables, are formulaic epithets that modify a specific word. In many cases, they are used before place-names, but they also modify words like "palace," "gods," "life," and other terms of special significance. Some makurakotoba are words of praise, others are simply descriptive, and many have obscure meanings and origins. One function of pillow words appears to have been rhythmic, producing a 5–7/5–7–7 rhythm in the tanka and a 5–7/5–7/5–7 rhythm in the chōka, since the pillow word (5) and the modified phrase (7) must be read together as a unit. Originally they may have lent a sacred significance to the words they modified. Some may also be references to legends, particularly those modifying place-names. In Kakinomoto no Hitomaro's poems, though, pillow words tend to have specific meanings and are usually translated as adjectives or as adjectival phrases.

The *jokotoba* (preface phrase) usually consists of two or three measures and introduces the main topic of the poem or a particular section of a long poem. In general, the jokotoba is connected to the poem's main statement through a pun, in which case it often has no direct connection to the meaning of the poem, or through metaphoric association (for instance, "the river passes away [like] my love [passed away]"). In contrast to makurakotoba, jokotoba are not formulaic epithets and often are unique to a particular poem. They can be considered metaphorical or punning introductions to the main statement of the poem. Because of the difficulty of translating puns, most preface phrases are translated with an explanatory word such as "like" or "as."

Tsuiku (binary measures) are a rhetorical technique of Chinese origin most often used in chōka. The most common tsuiku establish some kind of spatial or temporal framework, such as day/night, morning/evening, spring/autumn,

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land/sea, and heaven/earth. Many of them are formulaic phrases used in a variety of contexts.

The *Man'yōshū* is generally divided into four historical periods. The first period covers the poetry produced before the Jinshin war (672). The second period begins after the Jinshin war and ends with the capital's move to Nara (710). The third period contains poetry produced from 710 to the somewhat arbitrary date of 733 (the date of the poet Yamanoue no Okura's death). The fourth period continues to 759, the date of the last poem in the *Man'yōshū*.

The *Man'yōshū* is a vast anthology that includes poems composed over more than a century and compiled over some seventy-five years. The *Man'yōshū* probably began to be compiled in and around the court in the second period. In the third period, with the move of the capital to Nara and the expansion of the ritsuryō state, poetic circles also were formed outside the capital when courtiers were sent to the provinces as governors. By the fourth period, the compilation of the *Man'yōshū* appears to have become mainly a private enterprise by Ōtomo no Yakamochi (d. 785) and his circle in Etchū Province.

The *Man'yōshū* is written entirely in Chinese characters, which were used in two main ways: as *kun*, or Japanese readings (reading the graph for "house" as *ihe*), and as *on*, or one-unit Sino-Japanese readings (reading the graph for "house" as *ke*). In addition, the kun readings could have a semantic value or could have been used also for their sound. The other possibilities include the reading of characters by semantic association, such as writing the character for "winter" but reading it as "cold."

The *Man'yōshū* was a cultural production of the aristocracy, and therefore emperors and high-ranking aristocrats are well represented. But with the exception of the Ōtomo clan poets (Tabito, Lady Sakanoue, Yakamochi), most of the major poets of the *Man'yōshū* seem to have been lower-ranking aristocrats, such as Hitomaro, Akahito, Okura, and Mushimaro. Many of these lower-ranking poets may have had collections of their own, as can be deduced by references in the *Man'yōshū* to the *Hitomaro Collection*, the *Mushimaro Collection*, and *Yamanoue no Okura's Forest of Classified Poetry*, to cite just a few examples. The *Man'yōshū* was, in a sense, a collection of collections.

In regard to the *Man'yōshū* as a whole, it is clear that *uta* (poetry) was a very versatile practice: it was used as a mythical-historical narrative, as an expression of mourning, and as entertainment at banquets; to describe the political order; to tell tales and legends, for both real and fictional social interaction and correspondence; and to mark public occasions at court. In addition, and perhaps most important, poetry was something to be collected and classified in encyclopedic fashion. The *Man'yōshū* thus was compiled not only as a definitive guide to poetic practice but also as a monument of poetic knowledge.

[Introduction by Torquil Duthie]

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FIRST PERIOD

With the exception of poems attributed to early emperors like Nintoku (r. 313–399) and Yūryaku (r. 456–479), the first period of the *Man'yōshū* covers the reigns of Jomei (r. 629–641), his wife Kōgyoku (r. 642–645), Kōgyoku's brother Kōtoku (r. 645–654), Kōgyoku's reaccession as Saimei (r. 655–661), and Jomei's son Tenchi (r. 662–671). It has been argued that the first compilers of the *Man'yōshū* looked back to Jomei as the founder of a line of rulers to which their own court belonged. This would explain why Kōtoku's reign is not mentioned in the *Man'yōshū*, since Kōtoku was Jomei's brother-in-law and therefore not part of Jomei's line. In addition, scholars have speculated that for the early-eighth-century compilers, Jomei's reign marked the transition from what was perceived as the "ancient" period to the "modern" period. This is supported by the fact that the *Kojiki* begins with the age of the gods and tells the story of the sovereigns up to Suiko (r. 593–628), the empress who preceded Jomei. The corpus of poetry of the *Man'yōshū*'s first period is very small and includes, in addition to a number of poems attributed to various "ancient" and "modern" emperors of Yamato, poetry by women of the imperial family, such as Lady Nukata.

EMPEROR YŪRYAKU

The first poem in the anthology is attributed to Emperor Yūryaku (r. 456–479). The name Yūryaku is a posthumous name from the Nara period, but in the *Man'yōshū* his name is given as "the Heavenly Sovereign Ōhatsuse Wakatakeru." Yūryaku/Wakatakeru is given particular importance in the *Kojiki*, where he is described as a great lover. Accordingly, it is fitting that the first half of the poem is a courtship song. The speaker calls out to the girl picking herbs (a rite of spring associated with fertility and courtship) and asks her to identify her house (family) and her home, the equivalent to proposing marriage. In the second half of the poem, however, this "suitor" describes himself in solemn terms as the ruler of Yamato.

Given the choice of diction and grammar of the poem, scholars agree that it cannot possibly date from Wakatakeru's reign in the fifth century but instead is probably a later adaptation of an old courtship song. The choice of this poem to begin the anthology was perhaps based on its combination of the themes of courtship and power (two main themes of *Man'yōshū* poetry), as well as on the supposed authorship of a model lover and ruler of the ancient age like Wakatakeru/Yūryaku.

Your Basket, with Your Lovely Basket

1:1

A poem by the Heavenly Sovereign.

komo yo mikomochi	Your basket, with your lovely basket
fukushimo yo mibukushimochi	your trowel, with your lovely trowel

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kono oka ni na tsumasu ko	girl, you who pick herbs on this hill,
ie norase na norasane	speak of your house. Speak of your name.
soramitsu Yamato no kuni wa	In the Land of Yamato, seen from the sky,[5]
oshinabete ware koso ore	it is I who conquer and reign
shikinabete ware koso imase	it is I who conquer and rule.
ware kosoba norame	Let it be me who speaks
ie o mo na o mo	of my house and my name.

EMPEROR JOMEI

The second poem in the *Man'yōshū* is attributed to Emperor Jomei (r. 629–641). It usually is read as a poem describing a "land-looking" (*kuni-mi*) ritual in which the lord would climb a mountain to look over the land and affirm its prosperity as well as his own power over it. In the *Nihon shoki*, in an entry in the chapter dedicated to the ancient emperor Nintoku (313–399), the sovereign is described as climbing a mountain. When he finds no smoke rising from the hearths of his people, he exempts the whole realm from taxes for three years and allows his palace to fall into disrepair for the sake of his subjects. Jomei's poem, however, seems to represent the opposite scenario, as smoke is rising (indicating that his subjects are prosperous) and birds are flying over the sea (indicating plentiful fish). Jomei is thus celebrating, or perhaps "praying" for, Yamato as a bountiful and prosperous land.

In addition, scholars have noted that the sea cannot actually be seen from the top of Mount Kagu, which suggests that Jomei's power of "looking" goes much further than the power of actual eyesight. Indeed, "looking" in this context appears to be a metaphor for "ruling"—that is, for the "scope" of Jomei's power, defined as the sum of land and sea. The place-name Yamato has two meanings. The first is the province of Yamato (present-day Nara), where Mount Kagu is located and the capital was situated. The second meaning is the "land of Yamato" in the last phrase of the poem, which refers to the whole of "Japan." Another interpretation is that the rising smoke and birds are manifestations of the spirits of the land and sea. This would suggest that Jomei's power consists in being able to "see" what is invisible to the average eye and thus that Jomei has a connection to the "other world" of gods and spirits. Mount Kagu is one of the so-called three mountains of Yamato, together with Mount Unebi and Mount Miminashi, which were in the vicinity of the Asuka capital. A legend in the *Kojiki* describes how Mount Kagu fell to the earth from heaven, and it is probably due to this that the name of the mountain is almost always preceded by the epithet "of heaven."

5. "Seen from the sky" (*sora mitsu*) is a pillow word for the place-name Yamato.

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Climbing Mount Kagu and Looking upon the Land

1:2

The Heavenly Sovereign, a poem at the time of climbing Mount Kagu and looking upon the land.

Yamato ni wa murayama ari to	In Yamato, amid a ring of hills
toriyorou ame no Kaguyama	stands Mount Kagu of Heaven,
noboritachi kunimi o sureba	and when I climb up to look on the land,
kunihara wa keburi tachitatsu	from the plain of the land, smoke rises and rises,
unahara wa kamame tachitatsu	from the plain of the sea, birds rise and rise;
umashi kuni so akizushima	a splendid land, the dragonfly island,
Yamato no kuni wa	the land of Yamato.

LADY NUKATA

Little is known about Lady Nukata (Nukata no Ōkimi, b. ca. 638, active until 690s). Judging by her title, she was a descendant of a previous emperor (the title "Ōkimi" was used by descendants of emperors up to the fifth generation). She had a relationship with Prince Ōama (later Emperor Tenmu, r. 672–686), by whom she had a daughter (Princess Tōchi), but then appears to have entered the service of Ōama's elder brother, Emperor Tenchi (r. 662–671). Whether she also had a relationship with Tenchi is unclear, but she is not listed as one of his wives in the *Nihon shoki*. Many of Lady Nukata's poems in the *Man'yōshū* are attributed also to Empress Saimei (r. 655–661), indicating that she composed poems on the empress's behalf, perhaps in the role of a medium or priestess.

On Spring and Autumn

The following is one of the most famous poems in the *Man'yōshū*. It compares spring and autumn or, more precisely, the hills of spring and the hills of autumn, the different scenery created by different seasons. But the poem's meaning is elusive. Why does Nukata judge in favor of the autumn hills? The main reason appears to be that in the autumn hills the leaves can be "picked" and "seen" better than can the flowers in the spring hills. The emphasis on spring and autumn (versus summer and winter) was originally due to the importance of these seasons in the agricultural year. As Nukata's poem illustrates, spring and autumn are seasons of transition and change, a seasonal theme that in the later poetry of the *Kokinshū* (*Collection of Ancient and Modern Poems*, ca. 905) developed into an aesthetic of impermanence.

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1:16

When the Heavenly Sovereign commanded the great minister of the center, Fujiwara no Asomi,[6] to compare the charms of the myriad flowers of the spring hills with the beauty of the thousand leaves of the autumn hills, Lady Nukata expressed her judgment with a poem.

fuyugomori haru sarikureba	When spring arrives, emerging from winter,[7]
nakazarishi tori mo kinakinu	where nothing sang, the birds now sing
sakazarishi hana mo sakeredo	where nothing blossomed, flowers blossom
yama oshimi irite mo torazu	yet the hills are so lush, that nothing can be picked,
kusabukami torite mo mizu	and the grass is so deep that nothing can be seen.
akiyama no ko no ha o mite wa	But in the autumn hills I can see the tree leaves
momichi oba torite so shinofu	and pick the yellow ones with wonder
aoki oba okite so nageku	while I leave the green ones with longing:
soko shi urameshi	and that is my only regret,
akiyama so are wa	as I choose the autumn hills.

[Introductions and translations by Torquil Duthie]

SECOND PERIOD

The second period of the *Man'yōshū*, from the time of the Jinshin war (672) up to the capital's move to Nara (710), covers the reigns of Tenmu (672–686), Jitō (687–696), Monmu (697–707), and Genmei (707–715). Until Tenmu's reign, it had been the custom for each succeeding ruler to construct a new palace on a new site in the area of Asuka (the southern part of the Nara basin). But starting in Tenmu's reign, the court showed greater interest in constructing a permanent palace within a surrounding capital city on the model of Chinese cities, such as the Tang capitals of Chang'an and Luoyang, designed in accordance with principles of cosmology and geomancy. The first of such attempts was the capital of Fujiwara (also in the southern part of the Nara basin), to which the court of Tenmu's consort and successor Empress Jitō moved in 694. This first "permanent" capital lasted only until 710, when the court of Jitō's daughter-in-law Genmei moved the capital north of Fujiwara to Heijō (Nara).

6. Fujiwara no Kamatari. At this time, though, he would have been known as Nakatomi Kamatari, since the name Fujiwara was given to him on his deathbed by Emperor Tenchi. This suggests that the heading of the poem dates from later than the poem's original composition.

7. "Emerging from winter" (*fuyugomori*) is a pillow word for "spring" (*haru*).

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The building of these Chinese-style capitals was part of an effort to establish a Chinese-style state, along with elaborate penal and administrative codes (ritsuryō), hierarchical systems of rank, the codification of state rituals, and the production of state mythologies, histories, and official poetry collections. It was while the capital was at Fujiwara that the *Man'yōshū* began to be compiled.

The outstanding poet of the second period is Kakinomoto no Hitomaro, who composed a number of chōka commemorating important occasions at court, such as journeys by members of the royalty and the deaths of princes, as well as more private poems.

KAKINOMOTO NO HITOMARO

Kakinomoto no Hitomaro (active late seventh century) is regarded as the greatest poet in the *Man'yōshū*. His dates are unknown, and there are no extant references to him besides the prose headnotes to his poems. For this reason, he is thought to have been a courtier with a rank too low to merit mention in the official histories, the *Nihon shoki* and the *Shoku Nihongi* (ca. 797). Most of the poems "composed by Hitomaro" are chōka accompanied by envoys in the tanka form, the earliest of which can be dated to the year 689. Thus, even though Hitomaro may have been active during Tenmu's reign, it was during Jitō's reign that he played a major role. His poems are often divided into two types: "public poems" in honor of the sovereign and members of the ruling family and "private poems" such as those on the death of his wife.

Hitomaro's poetry is a clear departure from that of his predecessors. His chōka are much longer and more elaborate, and his use of pillow words (*makurakotoba*), preface phrases (*jokotoba*), and paired measures (*tsuiku*) is more complex. He composed many *banka* (laments) on the deaths of princes of the imperial family and was responsible for the poetic deification of Emperor Tenmu and Empress Jitō. In addition, his poetry is characterized by the use of metaphors and comparisons that occur nowhere else. The most famous example is the analogy between swaying seaweed and a woman lying down, in the poem on the death of his wife.

Not long after his death, the persona of Hitomaro became the subject of legend, and in the *Kana* Preface to the *Kokinshū*, he is described as "the sage of poetry."

The Lament for Prince Kusakabe

The following is the earliest poem by Hitomaro that can be dated. The heading states that it was composed "at the time of the temporary burial palace of the Sovereign Prince Peer of the Sun," which refers to Tenmu's son and heir, Prince Kusakabe. According to the *Nihon shoki,* Kusakabe died in 689, after Tenmu had died (686) but before he had officially succeeded his father. Temporary burial palaces were buildings

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By the mid-eleventh century, Kakinomoto no Hitomaro had become the "patron saint of poets" (*uta no hijiri*) and was worshiped as a god. This hanging scroll, possibly produced in the Kamakura period, is traditionally attributed to Fujiwara no Nobuzane (1176–1269?), a court painter best known for his realistic style of portraiture. The inscription is by Nakamikado Nobuhide (1469–1531). (By permission of the Kyoto National Museum)

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in which the bodies of rulers and princes were placed for an indefinite period of mourning before their final cremation and interment. In the case of Emperor Tenmu, the period of temporary burial and rites lasted for more than two years, during which time Tenmu's wife, Jitō, and their son Kusakabe appear to have been in charge of the court. Although Kusakabe was designated to succeed his father, he died only six months after Tenmu's burial. In the following year, Tenmu's wife, Jitō, was officially installed as empress.

Hitomaro's poem begins with a mythological narrative of how sovereignty over heaven and earth was initially divided. This account differs from the more familiar mythology of the *Kojiki* and the various creation myths recorded in the *Nihon shoki*. In Hitomaro's account, the first god-ruler of the "land of rice and reed plains" was Tenmu himself, who was sent down from heaven to rule. Within this framework Kusakabe becomes not just the heir to the ruler but also the heir to a "heavenly lord," and thus his death acquires mythological significance.

1:167–169

At the time of the temporary burial palace of the Sovereign Prince Peer of the Sun, a poem composed by Kakinomoto no Hitomaro, with short poems.

ametsuchi no hajime no toki	In the beginning of heaven and earth
hisakata no ama no kawara ni	on the riverbanks of celestial heaven,
yaoyorozu chiyorozu kami no	the eight hundred myriad, thousand myriad gods,
kamutsudoi tsudoi imashite	when in divine assembly they assembled
kamu wakachi wakachishi toki ni	and in divine decision they decided
amaterasu hirume no mikoto	that the heaven-shining sun-woman sovereign
ame oba shirashimesu to	would reign and rule in heaven
ashihara no mizuho no kuni o	and that in the land of rice and reed plains,
ametsuchi no yoriai no kiwami	until heaven and earth came to a close,
shirashimesu kami no mikoto to	the divine sovereign was to reign and rule,
amakumo no yaekaki wakete	they opened the eightfold heavenly clouds
kamu kudashi imasematsurishi	and in divine descent sent down
takaterasu hi no miko wa	the high-shining sun prince,[8]
Asuka no Kiyomi no miya ni	who in the palace of Kiyomi in Asuka,[9]

8. The "high-shining sun prince" (*takaterasu hi no miko*) was Emperor Tenmu's title. The poem suggests that in heaven Tenmu was known as the "divine sovereign" (*kami no mikoto*), and on earth (the "land of rice and reed plains") he was revealed as the "high-shining sun prince."

9. Tenmu's palace, also known as Kiyomihara.

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kamu nagara futoshikimashite	being divine, firmly ruled and decreed
sumeroki no shikimasu kuni to	that the land would be ruled by the heavenly lords,[10]
ama no hara iwato o hiraki	then opened the stone gates to the heavenly plain,
kamu agari agariimashinu	and in divine ascent has ascended.
waga ōkimi miko no mikoto no	Our great lord the sovereign prince,[11]
ame no shita shirashimesu yo wa	the realm he is to reign and rule beneath heaven,
haruhana no tōtoku aramu to	may it flourish nobly like the spring blossoms,
mochizuki no tatawashikemu to	may it wax great like the full moon,
ame no shita yomo no hito no	thus the people of the four corners beneath heaven
ōbune no omoitanomite	hope for his reign as if for a great ship[12]
amatsumizu augite matsu ni	and wait in awe as for water from heaven
ikasama ni omohoshimese ka	—but what designs are in his mind?—[13]
tsure mo naki Mayumi no oka ni	on Mayumi Hill, where he has no destiny,[14]
miyabashira futoshiki imashi	he firmly builds the palace pillars,
miaraka o takashirimashite	he raises high the sacred hall[15]
asakoto ni mikoto towasanu	and does not speak his morning words.[16]
hitsuki no maneku narinure	Now many days and months have passed
soko yue ni miko no miyahito	and that is why the prince's courtiers
yukue shirazu mo	do not know where to go.

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10. By the descendants of the first "heavenly lord" who came down to earth—that is, Tenmu himself.

11. Tenmu's son and chosen successor, Prince Kusakabe, referred to in the headnote as the Sovereign Prince Peer of the Sun (Hinami no miko no mikoto).

12. "As if for a great ship" (*ōbune no*) is a pillow word for "hope" (*omoitanomu*).

13. In Prince Kusakabe's mind.

14. That is, his destiny was to accede to the throne.

15. "Firmly builds the palace pillars, . . . raises high the sacred hall" is a formulaic expression normally used to describe accession to the throne. In this case, however, since what Kusakabe is building is his own temporary burial palace, the purpose of the expression is to describe Kusakabe's death euphemistically as "accession" to the other world.

16. That is, he does not give the palace courtiers their morning commands.

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hanka nishū	Two Envoys
hisakata no ame miru gotoku *augi mishi miko no mikado no* *aremaku oshi mo*	As though looking up at celestial heaven we looked up in awe at the prince's palace and now we grieve at its abandonment.
akanesasu hi wa teraseredo *nubatama no yo wataru tsuki no* *kakuraku oshi mo*	Although the striking red sun shines, the moon[17] crosses the black jewel night and we grieve at its concealment.

In another text, the second poem is the envoy to a poem from the time of the temporary burial palace of another sovereign prince.[18]

The Yoshino Praise Poems

According to the *Nihon shoki*, Empress Jitō made thirty-one visits to the Yoshino Palace between 689 and 696, the year of her abdication, an average of three or four times a year. Yoshino, located about ten miles south of the Asuka capital, was a site of great symbolic importance for the Jitō court because of its association with Jitō's husband and predecessor, Tenmu, who had established his headquarters at Yoshino before the Jinshin war. Thus Yoshino was seen as the origin of the current political order. Yoshino also seems to have been associated with a Daoist cult of immortality, which may have been a factor in Tenmu's choice of this site.

As the *Man'yōshū* compilers speculate in the endnote, the poems probably date from the time around Jitō's official accession to the throne. The two chōka have an almost identical structure, the first describing the empress's rule over the human world and the second, her rule over the divine world. Both poems are characterized by the presence of binary measures (*tsuiku*) with spatial and temporal motifs. In the first chōka, the empress is described as building the "palace pillars," and the courtiers cross the river to the palace in the morning and in the evening (suggesting that they are at her service all day long). The chōka ends with the mountain that "commands the heights" and the river that "flows unceasingly." Both are metaphors praising the palace. In the envoy, the courtiers' pledge to "return to see [Yoshino] flow unceasingly" is a reference to a poem by Emperor Tenmu, in which he commands his descendants to "look well on Yoshino."

In the second chōka, the empress again "raises high the high halls" and climbs to the top of the palace to "look on the land," just as Jomei climbed Mount Kagu in *Man'yōshū* 1:2. Here the mountain gods are said to present offerings in the spring and in the autumn (indicating that they are at her service all year round), and the river

17. The "moon" is Prince Kusakabe, and the "sun" probably refers to Empress Jitō.

18. Probably Prince Takechi, who died in 696 and for whom Hitomaro also wrote a long banka, which also has been translated here.

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gods send cormorants to the "upper shoals" and cast nets across the "lower shoals" to present food to her. This pairing of "mountain and river" is influenced by Chinese precedent, in which it stands as a metaphor for the entire realm. The climax of the chōka describes Empress Jitō as a god who rules over the lesser gods of the mountains and rivers and defines her reign as "the age of a god." Empress Jitō is thus presented as an absolute ruler, reigning over people, gods, space, and time.

1:36–39

At the time of the Heavenly Sovereign[19] going to the Yoshino palace, poems composed by Kakinomoto no Hitomaro.

yasumishishi waga ōkimi no	Our great lord of the eight corners,
kikoshiosu ame no shita ni	she who commands and rules all beneath heaven,
kuni wa shi mo sawa ni aredomo	although her lands are indeed many,
yamakawa no kiyoki kafuchi to	for the clear pools of its mountain river
mikokoro o Yoshino no kuni no	her heart is drawn to the land of Yoshino,[20]
hana jirau Akizu no nohe ni	and on the Akizu plains, where flowers scatter
miyabashira futoshikimashite	she firmly builds the palace pillars
momoshiki no ōmiyahito wa	and thus the courtiers of the glorious palace
funa namete asakawa wataru	line up the boats to cross the morning river
funa gioi yūkawa wataru	and race the boats to cross the evening river.
kono kawa no tayuru koto naku	This river that flows unceasingly,
kono yama no iya takashirasu	this mountain that commands the heights,
mina sosogu tagi no miyako wa	the glorious palace by the surging water,
miredo akanu kamo	we never tire to see.
hanka	Envoy
miredo akanu	We never tire to see
Yoshino no kawa no tokoname no	the eternal bed of the Yoshino River

19. Empress Jitō (r. 687–697)

20. There is a play on words here between the place-name Yoshino and *yoshi* (good) and *yosu* (draw).

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tayuru koto naku mata kaerimimu	may we return to see it flow unceasingly.[21]

yasumishishi waga ōkimi	Our great lord who reigns in peace,
kamu nagara kamu sabisesu to	being divine, acts divinely,
Yoshinogawa tagitsu kafuchi ni	and by the rapids of Yoshino River
takadono o takashirimashite	raises high the high halls,
noboritachi kunimi o seseba	and when she climbs up to look on the land,
tatanaharu aokakiyama no	from the green and manifold mountains
yamatsumi no matsuru mitsuki to	the mountain gods present their offerings,
haru he wa hana kazashimochi	bringing her blossoms in the spring
aki tateba momichi kazaseri	and yellow leaves when autumn comes,
yukisou kawa no kami mo	and the running river gods too
ōmike ni tsukaematsuru to	make their offerings for the sacred meal,
kamitsuse ni ukawa o tachi	sending cormorants to the upper shoals
shimotsuse ni sade sashiwatasu	and casting nets in the lower shoals.
yamakawa mo yorite tsukauru	Such is this glorious age of a god
kami no miyo kamo	whom both mountain and river come to serve.
hanka	Envoy
yamakawa mo yorite tsukauru	Being a god
kamu nagara	whom both mountain and river come to serve
tagitsu kafuchi ni funade sesu kamo	in the rapids she sets her boat to sail.

In reference to the preceding, the *Nihon shoki* states, "In the New Year of the third year of the reign (689), the Heavenly Sovereign went to the palace of Yoshino. In the eighth month the Heavenly Sovereign went to the palace of Yoshino. In the second month of the fourth year of the reign (690), the Heavenly Sovereign went to the palace of Yoshino. In the fifth month, the Heavenly Sovereign went to the palace of Yoshino. In the New Year of the fifth year of the reign (691), the Heavenly Sovereign went to the palace of Yoshino. In the fourth month, the Heavenly Sovereign went to the palace of Yoshino." It is not clearly known in which month (Hitomaro) was in attendance and the poems were composed.

21. "Flow unceasingly" refers to both the river and the speaker's pledge to return.

Bahan dengan hak cipta

Poems on the Aki Fields

The following poem was composed on the occasion of a hunting trip led by the eleven-year-old Prince Karu to the fields of Aki, about ten miles from the Asuka capital. Prince Karu (682–707) was Empress Jitō's grandson and the son of Prince Kusakabe, who died in 689. In 697 he was designated crown prince, and in the same year he succeeded Empress Jitō to become the ruler we know as Emperor Monmu (r. 697–707). This poem, which scholars date to around 693, can be seen as an attempt to legitimize Prince Karu's claim to succession by emphasizing his connection to his deceased father, Prince Kusakabe.

In the chōka, Prince Karu's trip to the Aki fields is described in mythical terms as if the eleven-year-old boy were a god flying like a bird over the hills and casting trees and stones from his path. The refrain "remembering the past" refers to "remembering" Prince Kusakabe, who used to hunt on these very same fields of Aki. After sleeping all night on the fields and "remembering the past," at dawn the company sets out to hunt, at the very same "time" that Prince Kusakabe used to hunt. In addition to being an aristocratic pastime, hunting symbolized political authority, and thus the description of Prince Karu retracing his father's hunting route had powerful political undertones.

1:45–49

At the time when Prince Karu spent the night in the fields of Aki, poems by Kakinomoto no Hitomaro.

yasumishishi waga ōkimi	Our great lord of the eight corners,
takaterasu hi no miko	the high shining sun prince,
kamu nagara kamu sabisesu to	being divine he acts divinely,
futoshikasu miyako o okite	leaving the palace that he firmly rules,
Komoriku no Hatsuse no yama no	and on Mount Hatsuse in Komoriku,
maki tatsu araki yamaji o	on the mountain road of evergreen trees
iwa ga ne saeki oshinabe	he pushes aside both trees and stones
sakadori no asa koemashite	and like a bird crosses the morning hills,
tamakagiru yū sarikureba	and when the gem-gleaming evening arrives
miyuki furu Aki no ōno ni	on the fields of Aki where snow is falling,
hatasusuki shino o oshinabe	he pushes aside both bamboo and pampas grass
kusamakura tabiyadori sesu	and on a grass pillow rests for the night
inishie omoite	remembering the past.

tanka	Short Poems
aki no no ni yadoru tabihito	On the Aki fields, as the resting travelers
uchinabiki i mo nurame ya mo	lie down, will they be getting any sleep
inishie omou ni	while remembering the past?

Bahan dengan hak cipta

makusa karu arano ni wa aredo	Though it is but a barren field with shorn grass,
momichiba no suginishi kimi no katami to so koshi	we have come in memory of our lord who passed away like the autumn leaves.

himugashi no no ni kagiroi no tatsu miete kaerimi sureba tsuki katabukinu	In the eastern fields the blaze can be seen rising, and as we turn back to look the moon has set.

hinamishi no miko no mikoto no uma namete mikari tatashishi	The time is coming when the sovereign prince who was peer of the sun[22]
toki wa kimukau	arrayed the horses and set out to hunt.

The Lament for Prince Takechi

The following is the second of Hitomaro's "poems on temporary burial" and is the longest poem in the *Man'yōshū*. Prince Takechi died in the year 696 at the age of forty-three. For the last six years of his life, he was Empress's Jitō's chancellor (*daijō daijin*). Although in principle Takechi's mother was of too low a rank for him to become emperor, in the heading to the poem he is styled as "the sovereign Prince" (*miko no mikoto*), indicating that he does appear to have been, at least temporarily, the next in line to the throne. He was the highest in rank of Emperor Tenmu's surviving sons, since both Prince Kusakabe and Prince Ōtsu had died. The *Nihon shoki* suggests that by granting him larger fiefs, Empress Jitō made him far more powerful than any of the other princes. Takechi's death was therefore of immense significance to the entire court.

The poem begins by describing the Jinshin war and Tenmu's command to subdue the "unruly peoples" and the "defiant lands," which refer to the forces of Emperor Tenchi's son Prince Ōtomo and the allies of the Ōmi court. Takechi receives Tenmu's command, and the first half of the poem is a mythical narrative of the war, resulting in Tenmu's unchallenged rule of the "land of rice and reed plains" (a mythical name for Japan). The *Nihon shoki* also cites Takechi's central role in the war. The second half of the poem begins by mentioning Takechi's role as chancellor and describes his death in tragic terms similar to that of Prince Kusakabe, Takechi's "building" his own palace of temporary burial, and the courtiers' bereavement and confusion at his death.

22. This refers to Prince Karu's father, the deceased Prince Kusakabe.

Bahan dengan hak cipta

2:199–201

At the time of the temporary burial palace of the sovereign Prince Takechi, a poem composed by Kakinomoto no Hitomaro, with short poems.

kakemaku mo yuyushiki kamo	Too sacred to utter aloud,
iwamaku mo aya ni kashikomi	too awesome even to speak of,
Asuka no Makami no hara ni	he[23] who in Asuka on the Makami plains
hisakata no amatsu mikado o	established in awesome splendor
kashikoku mo sadametamaite	the celestial heavenly palace
kamu sabu to iwagakurimasu	and now hides divinely in the rocks,
yasumishishi waga ōkimi no	our great lord of the eight corners,[24]
kikoshimesu sotomo no kuni no	in the northern lands he commands and rules,
maki tatsu Fuwayama koete	crossed Mount Fuwa of the evergreen trees,[25]
koma tsurugi Wazami ga hara no	and on the plain of Wazami of the Korean swords[26]
karimiya ni amoriimashite	descended from heaven[27] to his temporary palace:
ame no shita osametamai	let us conquer all beneath heaven
osu kuni o sadametamau to	and bring peace and rule to the lands,
tori ga naku azuma no kuni no	let us summon the glorious troops
miikusa o meshitamaite	from the Eastern Lands where birds cry
chihayaburu hito o yawase to	to vanquish the unruly peoples
matsurowanu kuni o osame to	and conquer the defiant lands.
miko nagara maketamaeba	Thus by the sun prince[28] appointed to the task,
ōmimi ni tachi torihakashi	to his[29] glorious body he girded his sword,
ōmite ni yumi torimotashi	in his glorious hand he grasped his bow,
miikusa o adomoitamai	and as he called the troops into battle,
totonouru tsuzumi no oto wa	the sound of the summoning drums
ikazuchi no koe to kiku made	was like the booming voice of thunder
fukinaseru kuda no oto mo	and the sound of the blowing horns,
ata mitaru tora ga hoyuru to	like the roar of a hunting tiger,
morohito no obiyuru made ni	terrified the enemy multitudes.

23. Emperor Tenmu.

24. "Of the eight corners" (*yasumishishi*) is a pillow word for "our great lord" (*waga ōkimi*).

25. "Of the evergreen trees" (*maki tatsu*) is a pillow word for Fuwa.

26. "Of the Korean swords" (*komatsurugi*) is a pillow word for Wazami.

27. "Descended from heaven" (*amoriimashite*) suggests that Tenmu is a heavenly god.

28. The [High-Shining Sun] Prince—that is, Emperor Tenmu.

29. This refers to Prince Takechi, who is "appointed to the task" of conquering the realm by his father Tenmu (the "sun prince").

Bahan dengan hak cipta

sasagetaru hata no maneki wa	The rippling of the hoisted banners
fuyugomori haru sarikureba	wafting and waving in the wind
nogoto ni tsukite aru hi no	was like the fires that alight on the plains
kaze no muta nabikau gotoku	when spring arrives, emerging from winter,[30]
torimoteru yuwazu no sawaki	and the resounding of the bowstrings
miyuki furu fuyu no hayashi ni	was so awesome to hear
tsumuji kamo ima kiwataru to	it felt like a whirlwind was blowing
omou made kiki no kashikoku	through the snow in a winter forest;
hikihanatsu ya no shigekeku	and the swarm of arrows that flew
ōyuki no midarete kitare	came scattering down like a snowstorm,
matsurowazu tachimukaishi mo	and the defiant as they stood,
tsuyushimo no kenaba kenu beku	like the dew and the frost destined to perish,
yuku tori no arasou hashi ni	like flying birds were fighting to the last,
Watarai no itsuki no miya yu	when from the sacred shrine of Watarai[31]
kamikaze ni ifukimatowashi	a divine wind suddenly blew forth,
amakumo o hi no me mo miezu	the heavenly clouds concealed the sun,
tokoyami ni ōhitamaite	and they were covered by an eternal darkness.
sadameteshi mizuho no kuni o	Thus was conquered the land of rice and reed plains,
kamu nagara futoshikimashite	which being divine, he[32] firmly ruled,
yasumishishi waga ōkimi no	and our great lord of the eight corners,[33]
ame no shita mōshitamaeba	since he governed[34] the realm beneath heaven,
yorozu yo ni shika shi mo aramu to	we thought it would be for a myriad ages,
yūhana no sakayuru toki ni	but just at the time of the flourishing blossoms,
waga ōkimi miko no mikado o	the glorious halls of our great lord the prince
kamumiya ni yosoimatsurite	we decorate as his divine palace
tsukaishishi mikado no hito mo	and the people who served his glorious halls,
shirotae no asagoromo kite	wearing long robes of fine white hemp,
Haniyasu no mikado no hara ni	on the plain of the Halls of Haniyasu,

30. "Emerging from winter" (*fuyugomori*) is a pillow word for "spring" (*haru*).
31. The Ise Shrine.
32. Tenmu.
33. Takechi.
34. Takechi, the chancellor during Empress Jitō's reign.

Bahan dengan hak cipta

akanesasu hi no kotogoto
shishijimono iwaifushitsutsu
nubatama no yūhe ni itareba

ōtono o furisake mitsutsu
uzura nasu iwaimotohori
samoraedo samoraieneba

harutori no samayoinureba
nageki mo imada suginu ni
omoi mo imada tsukineba
koto saeku Kudara no hara yu
kamu haburi haburiimashite
asa mo yoshi Kinoe no miya o
tokomiya to takaku shitatete
kamu nagara shizumarimashinu
shikaredomo wa ga ōkimi no
yorozu yo to omohoshimeshite
tsukurashishi Kaguyama no miya
yorozu yo ni sugimu to omoe ya
ame no goto furisake mitsutsu
tamadasuki kakete shinowamu

kashikoku ari to mo

every single striking red day,[35]
like wild beasts lie prostrated,
and when the gem-black evenings
come,[36]
look up to the glorious palace
and crawl around like quail:
they[37] would serve, but there is no one
to serve,
and wailing like spring birds
their sorrow does not pass,
their pain is not exhausted,
as on the plain of chattering Kudara[38]
in divine burial they bury him,
and Kinoe palace, fair in the morning,[39]
as his eternal palace he[40] builds high
and being divine, rests there in peace.
And yet the palace of Mount Kagu,[41]
which our lord built to stand
for a myriad ages, who can doubt
that it will outlast a myriad ages?
As we look up at it, as if to heaven,
with cords of gems let us mourn him
in sorrow,
though we be full of awe.

tanka nishū

hisakata no ame shirashinuru
kimi yue ni
hitsuki mo shirazu koiwataru
kamo

Two Short Poems

He has left to rule the celestial heavens,
our lord for whom we grieve
with no regard for the days and
the months.

35. "Striking red" (*akanesasu*) is a pillow word for "day" or "sun" (*hi*).

36. "Gem-black" (*nubatama no*) is a pillow word for "evening" (*yū*) or, more commonly, "night" (*yo*).

37. The courtiers.

38. One of the Korean kingdoms. "Chattering" (*koto saeku*) is a pillow word that probably refers to the foreign languages of the Korea Peninsula.

39. "Fair in the morning" (*asa mo yoshi*) is a pillow word for Kinoe.

40. This refers to Prince Takechi, who, like Prince Kusakabe in *Man'yōshū* 1:167, is described as building his own palace of temporary burial, his "eternal palace."

41. The palace of Mount Kagu seems to have been Takechi's dwelling in life.

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Haniyasu no ike no tsutsumi no	In the enclosed marsh of Haniyasu Lake
komorinu no yukue o shira ni	the courtiers are lost
toneri wa matou	and do not know which way to go.

Poems on Passing the Ruined Capital of Ōmi

The date that the following sequence of poems was composed is unknown. The occasion is a journey on which the travelers pass by the ruined capital of Ōmi. In 668, Emperor Tenchi (r. 662–671) moved the capital from its historical location in Asuka (in the province of Yamato) to the province of Ōmi (on Lake Biwa). This was an unprecedented move. According to the *Nihon shoki*, Tenchi had named his brother Prince Ōama his successor, but shortly before he died Tenchi appears to have changed his mind and transferred the succession to his son Prince Ōtomo. After Tenchi's death, a conflict known as the Jinshin war broke out between the forces of Ōtomo, who was based in the Ōmi capital, and Ōama, who was based in Yoshino, close to the old Asuka capital in Yamato. Ōama won the war and moved the capital back to Asuka, reigning as Emperor Tenmu. Tenmu was then succeeded by his wife (Tenchi's daughter), Empress Jitō. Thus, for the Jitō court, for which Hitomaro was writing, the Ōmi capital was a problematic topic. On the one hand, the present court was the product of a war that had been waged on the Ōmi capital. On the other, the Jitō court had many ties with the Ōmi court, not the least of which was the fact that the Ōmi emperor, Tenchi, was the current sovereign's father.

Hitomaro's poem on the Ōmi capital has often been read as an attempt to ritually pacify the spirits of the dead courtiers of the Ōmi capital. Many of the poem's expressions also appear in elegies (banka), suggesting that the poem is a lament on the ruins. By definition, the capital was the center of the realm, situated directly beneath "heaven." According to the poem, the present capital and all capitals (except Ōmi) were in Asuka in Yamato Province. Thus it follows that from the Yamato-centered point of view, Ōmi was "a barbarous place, far from heaven," and yet it was from Ōmi that Tenchi "reigned and ruled all beneath heaven." In other words, during Tenchi's reign, Ōmi was the center of the realm.

1:29–31

Passing by the ruined capital of Ōmi, poems composed by Kakinomoto no Hitomaro.

tamadasuki Unebi no yama no	Since the glorious age of the Kashiwara
Kashihara no hijiri no miyo yu	sun-ruler,[42] by Mount Unebi of the
	cords of gems,[43]

42. According to the *Kojiki* and the *Nihon shoki*, the legendary first emperor, known as Emperor Jinmu, reigned from the palace of Kashiwara.

43. "Cords of gems" is a pillow word for Unebi. Unebi is one of the Three Mountains of Yamato (the other two being Mount Kagu and Mount Miminashi), which were in the vicinity of the Asuka capital.

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aremashishi kami no kotogoto	each and every of the gods that have appeared[44]
tsuga no ki no iya tsugitsugi ni	like the winding spruce one after the next,
ame no shita shirashimeshishi o	have reigned and ruled all beneath heaven,
sora ni mitsu Yamato o okite	but to leave Yamato, so full of heaven,
ao ni yoshi Narayama o koe	and cross the Nara hills, so rich in green,[45]
ikasama ni omohoshimese ka	—what designs were in his mind,[46]
amazakaru hina ni wa aredo	that in a barbarous place, far from heaven,[47]
iwabashiru Ōmi no kuni ni	in the land of Ōmi of the racing rocks,[48]
sasanami no Ōtsu no miya ni	in the palace of Ōtsu of the lively waves,[49]
ame no shita shirashimeshikemu	he[50] reigned and ruled all beneath heaven?
sumeroki no kami no mikoto no	The heavenly lord, divine sovereign,
ōmiya wa koko to kikedomo	though we have heard here was his glorious palace,
ōtono wa koko to iedomo	though it is said here were his glorious halls,
harukusa no shigeku oitaru	now all is overgrown by the spring grass,
kasumi tachi haruhi no kireru	and clouded by the haze of the spring sun,
momoshiki no ōmiyadokoro	as we look at the site of the glorious palace
mireba kanashi mo	we are filled with sadness.
hanka	Envoys
Sasanami no Shiga no Karasaki	O Kara Cape of Shiga in Sasanami,
sakiku aredo	though you are unchanged,
ōmiyahito no fune machikanetsu	in vain we wait for the courtiers' boats.

44. Each and every one of the successive sovereigns.

45. "Rich in green" is a pillow word for Nara.

46. In Emperor Tenchi's mind.

47. "Far from heaven" is a pillow word for "barbarous." Anywhere far from the capital was also "far from heaven."

48. "Of the racing rocks" is a pillow word for Ōmi.

49. "Of the lively waves" (*sananami no*) is a pillow word for Ōtsu and other place-names in Ōmi. It also is a place-name itself.

50. Emperor Tenchi.

Material com direitos autorais

Sasanami no Shiga no ōwada	O Shore of Shiga in Sasanami,
yodomu to mo	though your waters are still,[51]
mukashi no hito ni mata awame	how could we meet the people of
ya mo	the past?

Poems on Parting from His Wife in Iwami

The poetic category of *sōmon* (exchanges) includes mostly short poems (*tanka*), with the following renowned exception of two chōka with tanka by Hitomaro. Although the poems have often been regarded as autobiographical, recent scholarship suggests that the male protagonist, the "I," was probably meant as a fictional figure with whom the courtiers traveling from the provinces to the capital could identify. The heading of the poem, which names Hitomaro himself as the protagonist, was likely a later addition by the compilers of volume 2, who fictionalized and romanticized Hitomaro's life.

One of the most curious aspects of the first chōka is its long introduction. The first half of the poem seems to be an extended preface phrase that introduces the woman by means of a pun on the seaweed drawing to the shore and the girl drawing close to the man in sleep. This metaphor of seaweed swaying for a woman lying down or making love is unique to Hitomaro. The preface of the second poem is similar, with the seaweed introducing the sleeping girl, but it is much shorter. This poem is remarkable for its use of imagery that in some of Hitomaro's other poems is used in reference to death (the moon covered by clouds, the sun setting) to describe parting.

2:131–137

Kakinomoto no Hitomaro, on parting from his wife in the land of Iwami and traveling up to the capital, two poems with short poems.

Iwami no umi Tsuno no urami o	In the sea of Iwami[52] is Tsuno Bay
ura nashi to hito koso mirame	which people may see as having no coves
kata nashi to hito koso mirame	and people may see as having no inlets,
yoshieyashi ura wa naku to mo	but yet, all the same, though it has no coves,
yoshieyashi kata wa naku to mo	and yet, all the same, though it has no inlets,
isanatori umihe o sashite	toward the shore of that whale-hunting sea,[53]

51. Flowing water is a metaphor for time passing. "Though your waters are still" has the connotation of "although time does not seem to pass."

52. Iwami was a province on the Japan Sea coast, on the west side of present-day Shimane Prefecture.

53. "Whale-hunting" (*isanatori*) is a pillow word for "sea" (*umi*).

Material com direitos autorais

Watazu no ariso no ue ni	and onto the barren beach of Watazu,
kaaoku ouru tamamo okitsumo	may the green gem weed and the open seaweed
asa hafuru kaze koso yoseme	be drawn by the morning wings of the wind,
yū hafuru nami koso kiyore	be drawn by the evening wings of the waves:
nami no muta kayori kakuyoru	and so by the waves drawn back and drawn forth,[54]
tama mo nasu yorineshi imo o	like gem weed, my girl drew to me in sleep,
tsuyushimo no okiteshi kureba	and since I left her, like the dew and the frost,[55]
kono michi no yasokumagoto ni	though a myriad times I turn to look back
yorozu tabi kaerimi suredo	on each of the eighty bends of this road,
iya tō ni sato wa sakarinu	farther and farther I've come from her village,
iya taka ni yama mo koekinu	and higher and higher I've crossed the hills.
natsukusa no omoishinaete	As I think of my girl, wilting with sorrow
shinofuramu imo ga kado mimu	like the summer grass, I wish I could see her gate:
nabike kono yama	Let these hills move aside!

hanka nishū	Two Envoys
Iwami no ya	In Iwami,
Takatsuno yama no	through the trees on the hill
ko no ma yori	of Takatsuno,
waga furu sode o imo mitsuramu ka	can my girl see me as I wave my sleeves?
sasa no ha wa	Though the *sasa*[56] leaves
miyama mo saya ni midaru to mo	may rustle and scatter on the hills,
are wa imo omou	I think of my girl from whom I
wakarekinureba	have parted.

54. The first half of the poem is an extended preface phrase introducing "my girl."

55. "Like the dew and the frost" (*tsuyushimo no*) is a pillow word for "leave" (*oku*) and implies "since I left her, like the dew and the frost are left on the ground."

56. A type of short bamboo.

Material com direitos autorais

Tsuno sawau Iwami no umi no	In Tsuno Bay[57] in the sea of Iwami,
koto saeku Kara no saki naru	on Kara Cape of the chattering voices,[58]
ikuri ni so fukamiru ouru	on the seabed the deep seaweed grows,
ariso ni so tamamo wa ouru	and on the barren beach the gem weed grows,
tamamo nasu nabikineshi ko o	and the girl who like gem weed slept beside me,
fukamiru no fukamete omoedo	like the deep seaweed was deep in my thoughts,
saneshi yo wa ikuda mo arazu	yet few were the nights that we slept together
hautsuta no wakareshikureba	before I left her like a parting vine,
kimo mukau kokoro o itami	with a heavy heart, my courage failing,[59]
omoitsutsu kaerimi suredo	and as I yearn now, turning to look back
ōbune no Watari no yama no	from Mount Watari, as if from a great ship,[60]
momichiba no chiri no magai ni	through the yellow leaves as they scatter
imo ga sode saya ni mo miezu	I cannot see my girl waving her sleeves,
tsumagomoru Yakami no yama no	and over the wife-hiding Mount Yakami,[61]
kumoma yori watarau tsuki no	the moon now crosses through the clouds,
oshikedomo kakuraikureba	and as it passes, regrettably, out of sight
amazutau irihi sashinure	the heaven-sent sun[62] has already set,
masurao to omoeru ware mo	and though I had thought I was a brave man,
shikitae no koromo no sode wa	the sleeves of my robe of fine quilted cloth
tōrite nurenu	are drenched with tears.
hanka nishū	Two Envoys
aokoma ga agaki o hayami	So fast is the gallop of my gray horse
kumoi ni so	that I have left behind
imo no atari o sugite kinikeru	the village of my girl beyond the clouds.

57. "In Tsuno Bay" is a translation of an obscure pillow word, *tsuno sawau*.

58. Kara appears to be a place on the coast of Iwami; it also was used to refer to the Korea Peninsula. The pillow word "of the chattering voices" (*koto saeku*) probably refers to the foreign languages spoken in Korea.

59. "Courage failing" is a conjectural translation of the pillow word *kimo mukau*, which literally means "facing the liver." *Kimo mukau* tends to appear in instances when the heart is described as weak.

60. "As if from a great ship" is a pillow word for the name Watari, which means "crossing."

61. "Wife-hiding" is a pillow word for *ya* (house/hut), modifying the place-name Yakami. The pillow word also implies that the wife ("my girl") is hidden behind the mountains and the speaker cannot see her.

62. "Heaven-sent" (*ametsutau*) is a pillow word for sun (*hi*).

Material com direitos autorais

akiyama ni otsuru momichiba	Yellow leaves, falling on the autumn hill,
shimashiku wa na chiri magai so	stop scattering for just a while
imo no atari mimu	so I may see the village of my girl.

Poems on the Death of His Wife

In addition to composing elegies (*banka*) in honor of members of the imperial family, Hitomaro composed a set of two poems on the death of his wife, the first of which is translated here. It is not known whether the poem is autobiographical or fictional. The opening suggests that the relationship is secret or forbidden and that the two lovers find it hard to meet. Then the "messenger" (through whom they correspond) comes to tell the protagonist that his wife has died. The death is described in a series of natural metaphors of passing (the sun setting, the autumn leaves) that are characteristic of Hitomaro. In the second half of the poem, the protagonist goes to the Karu market, not in search of the woman herself, but of her spirit. And yet, since he cannot hear the cries of the birds on Unebi Mountain (the dead were thought to manifest themselves as birds shortly after death) and she does not appear to him in the faces of passersby, he can do nothing but call her name and wave his sleeves (a ritual to summon the spirits of the dead back to life).

2:207–209

Kakinomoto no Hitomaro, after his wife died, crying tears of blood in his grief, composed two poems, with short poems.

ama tobu ya Karu no michi wa	On the road to Karu, that soars in heaven,[63]
wagimoko ga sato ni shi areba	was the village where my girl lived,
nemokoro ni mimaku hoshikedo	and I wanted to visit her with all my heart,
yamazu ikaba hitome o ōmi	but if I went too often, too many would see,
maneku ikaba hito shirinu bemi	and if I went many times, too many would know,
sanekazura nochi mo awamu to	so we parted like vines that meet again
ōbune no omoitanomite	or so I hoped, as if for a great ship,[64]
tamakagiru iwagakifuchi no	and to a pool surrounded by gem-gleaming[65] rocks
komori nomi koitsutsu aru ni	I retreated, but as I longed for her,
wataru hi no kurenuru ga goto	like the sky-crossing sun sets in the evening,

63. "That soars in heaven" (*ama tobu ya*) is a pillow word for Karu, which means "light."
64. "Great ship" (*ōbune no*) is a pillow word for "hope" (*omoitanomu*).
65. Here, "gem-gleaming" (*tamakagiru*) is a pillow word for "rock" (*iwa*).

Material com direitos autorais

terutsuki no kumogakuru goto	like the light of the moon is obscured by the clouds,
okitsumo no nabikishi imo wa	my girl, who like the deep seaweed had slept beside me,
momichiba no sugite iniki to	had passed away like the autumn leaves,
tamazusa no tsukai no ieba	so said the messenger of the catalpa gem,[66]
azusayumi oto ni kikite	and as I heard his voice like a catalpa bow,[67]
iwamu sube semu sube shira ni	I knew not what to say or what to do,
oto nomi o kikite arieneba	but since I could not bear to hear the words,
aga kouru chie no hitoe mo	and thinking there must be a way to find solace
nagusamoru kokoro mo ari ya to	for just a single part of my thousandfold longing,
wagimoko ga yamazu idemishi	I went where my girl always used to go,
Karu no ichi ni waga tachikikeba	to Karu Market, and stood there and listened,
tamadasuki Unebi no yama ni	but on Mount Unebi of the cords of gems
naku tori no oto mo kikoezu	I could not hear the voices of the birds,
tamahoko no michiyukibito no	and of the people walking on the road
hitori dani niteshi yukaneba	not a single one resembled my girl,
sube o nami imo ga na yobite	and all I could do was call out her name
sode so furitsuru	as I waved my sleeves.

tanka nishū	Two Short Poems
akiyama no momichiba o shigemi	I search for my girl who has lost her way
matoinuru imo o motomemu	in the thick yellow leaves of the autumn hill
yamaji shirazu mo	but do not know the mountain path.
momichiba no chiriyuku nae ni	As the yellow leaves scatter and fall,
tamazusa no tsukai o mireba	when I see a messenger of the catalpa gem[68]
aishi hi omohoyu	I think of the days when we met.

66. "Catalpa gem" (*tamazusa*) is a pillow word for "messenger" (*tsukai*).
67. "Catalpa bow" (*azusayumi*) is a pillow word for "sound" or "voice" (*oto*).
68. This refers to seeing any messenger between two lovers.

Material com direitos autorais

The Lament for Princess Asuka

The following lament for Princess Asuka is, in addition to being Hitomaro's last datable poem, the third of Hitomaro's three "laments of temporary interment" (*hinkyū banka*), the other two being for Prince Kusakabe and Prince Takechi. Whereas both Kusakabe and Takechi were successors to the throne at the time of their deaths, there is nothing to indicate that Princess Asuka was a figure of particular importance. She was a daughter of Emperor Tenchi and Lady Tachibana. According to the *Shoku Nihongi* (ca. 797), she died in 700. The poem has none of the political-mythical content of the laments for Kusakabe and Takechi and is more reminiscent of love exchanges and personal laments. The poem mentions Princess Asuka's husband (her "magnificent lord"), who is not identified. Scholars have speculated that he was Tenmu's second son, Prince Osakabe (d. 705).

The poem is an interesting mix of Hitomaro's public and private poetry. The voice of the poem grieves as a courtier of Princess Asuka but also describes her husband's grief at her death. The binary measures that were used in the Yoshino poems to express the absoluteness of Empress Jitō's power are used here to describe the absoluteness of Asuka's splendor and the husband's grief. The poem includes expressions similar to those in Hitomaro's poems on leaving his wife in Iwami and on the death of his wife. The envoys at the end of the poem are also similar in conception to the envoys to the Ōmi poems, with the metaphor of flowing water for time that cannot turn back.

2:196–198

At the time of the temporary burial palace of Princess Asuka, a poem by Kakinomoto no Hitomaro, with short poems.

tobutori no Asuka no kawa no	On the Asuka River, where the birds fly,[69]
kamitsuse ni ishibashi watashi	in the upper shoals there is a bridge of stone,
shimotsuse ni uchihashi watasu	and in the lower shoals a bridge of wood.
ishibashi ni oinabikeru	The gem weed that grows on the bridge of stone,
tamamo mo zo tayureba ouru	though it may wither, will grow back again.
uchihashi ni oi o oreru	The stream weed that grows on the bridge of wood,
kawamo mo zo karureba hayuru	though it may dry, will spring forth again.

69. "Where the birds fly" (*tobu tori no*) is a pillow word for Asuka. In fact, Asuka (the place) was customarily written with the characters for "fly" and "bird." In this poem, however, "Asuka" is written with the same characters as those of Princess Asuka's name.

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nani shi ka mo waga ōkimi no	So for what reason then, has my great lady,
tataseba tamamo no mokoro	who was like gem weed when she stood,
koyaseba kawamo no gotoku	and like stream weed when she lay down
nabikaishi yoroshiki kimi ga	by the side of her magnificent lord,
asamiya o wasuretamau ya	why has she forgotten his morning palace?
yūmiya o somukitamau ya	and why does she forsake his evening palace?
utsusomi to omoishi toki ni	When we thought she was of this world
haruhe ni wa hana orikazashi	her lord would bring her flowers in spring
akitateba momichiba kazashi	and yellow leaves when autumn came,
shikitae no sode tazusawari	and holding her hand beneath quilted sleeves
kagami nasu miredo mo akazu	he never tired to see her, radiant like a mirror,[70]
mochizuki no iya mezurashimi	and sometimes with her lord, who thought
omohoshishi kimi to tokidoki	she was fairer than the full moon,
idemashite asobitamaishi	she would go out on pleasure visits
mike mukau Kinoe no miya oto	to Kinoe palace, where feasts were held,[71]
tokomiya to sadametamaite	but now she makes that her eternal palace
ajisawau mekoto mo taenu	and her words and eyes are no more.
shikare kamo aya ni kanashimi	And that is why, in his terrible sadness,
nuedori no katakoizuma	like the tiger thrush longing for its mate,
asadori no kayowasu kimi ga	her lord goes to visit her with the morning birds,
natsukusa no omoishinaete	wilting in sorrow like the summer grass,
yūtsuzu no kayuki kakuyuki	going back and forth like the evening star,
ōbune no tayutau mireba	and as we see him reel like a great ship,
nagusamoru kokoro mo arazu	we have no way to give him solace
soko yue ni semu sube shire ya	and do not know what we can do
oto nomi mo na nomi taezu	but let the sound of her name extend
ametsuchi no iya tōnagaku	as far and as long as heaven and earth
shinoi ikamu mina ni kakaseru	and let us mourn by that which shares her name,

70. "Like a mirror" (*kagami nasu*) is a pillow word for "see" (*miru*).
71. "Where feasts were held" (*mike mukau*) is a pillow word for the place-name Kinoe.

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Asukagawa yorozu yo made ni	the Asuka River, and for a myriad ages
hashikiyashi waga ōkimi no	may we remember our great and beloved lady
katami ni koko o	here by her memento.

tanka nishū	Two Short Poems
Asukagawa shigarami watashi	If we had placed branches to stop its flow,
sekamaseba nagaruru mizu mo	across the Asuka River,
nodo ni ka aramashi	the running waters would have become still.

Asukagawa asu dani mimu to	River of Tomorrow, and though tomorrow
omoe ya mo	we will not see her
waga ōkimi no mina wasuresenu	we will not forget our great lady's name.

[Introductions and translations by Torquil Duthie]

THIRD PERIOD

The third period, beginning with the capital's move to Nara in 710 and ending with Yamanoue no Okura's death in 733, is when the majority of the poems of the *Man'yōshū* were composed. It includes the reigns of Genmei (707–715), Genshō (715–723), and Shōmu (724–749). With the establishment of a Chinese-style legal (ritsuryō) state, poetic circles appeared in the provinces, formed by middle-rank courtiers who were sent out from the capital as provincial governors. The most notable example of this was the poetic circle at Dazaifu (in Kyushu) headed by Ōtomo no Tabito and Yamanoue no Okura. Volume 5 of the *Man'yōshū* is devoted entirely to the poetry of Dazaifu and is thought to have been compiled by Okura and Tabito.

The court poetry of praise that emerged and flourished during Jitō's reign does not seem to have continued in subsequent reigns. But during Shōmu's reign, there was an attempt to re-create this public poetry of praise with the long poems by poets like Yamabe no Akahito and Kasa no Kanamura, who looked back to Hitomaro's poetry as a source of inspiration and composed similar poems on imperial excursions. Most of these poems are collected in volume 6. In this period, the long poems used a greater variety of themes. Good examples are Takahashi no Mushimaro's poetry on the legend of Urashima and Yamanoue no Okura's Chinese-influenced "Dialogue on Poverty."

YAMABE NO AKAHITO

Yamabe no Akahito was active between 724 and 736, but his exact dates are unknown. Like Hitomaro, there are no references to him except in the prose

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headnotes to his poems, and for this reason he is thought to have been of low rank. The date of his earliest poem in the *Man'yōshū*, on Mount Fuji (translated here), is usually estimated to have been between 720 and 724, and the date of his last poem is 736. Akahito is thought to have been at the forefront of a revival of court poetry during Shōmu's reign. He wrote many poems of praise on imperial excursions and was strongly influenced by Hitomaro's poetry, as can be seen in his poems on climbing Kamunabi (3:324–325) and on visiting Yoshino (6:923–925), both of which are translated here. One of Akahito's signature characteristics is his description of landscape. For this reason, it is often said that Hitomaro was a poet of sound and Akahito was a poet of images.

On Looking at Mount Fuji

The following poem is the first mention of Mount Fuji in the *Man'yōshū*. Situated some seventy miles from Tokyo, Mount Fuji has now become a symbol of Japan. But in the eighth century it was in what were referred to as the "eastern provinces" (Azuma), far from the Nara capital in Yamato. Some scholars have read the poem autobiographically, believing that Akahito was describing what he saw on a voyage to the eastern provinces. Other scholars see a connection to the tradition of "land-looking" (*kuni-mi*) poems (such as the earlier poem by Jomei). This view suggests that the purpose of the poem may have been to draw Mount Fuji (and the eastern provinces) symbolically closer to the Nara court.

The poem opens by announcing Mount Fuji's mythical origins in language that is reminiscent of the opening phrases of the *Kojiki*. Then the mountain's power is described in both spatial terms (it hides the light of the sun and the moon) and temporal terms (it is not subject to the seasonal cycle, as it is permanently covered in snow). The poem closes with an exhortation to transmit the glory of Mount Fuji to future generations. The envoy, which is one of the most famous poems in Japanese poetry, redescribes the sight of Mount Fuji, forever covered in snow.

3:317–318

A poem by Yamabe no Akahito on looking at Mount Fuji, with one envoy.

ametsuchi no	Since the heavens
wakareshi toki yu	and earth were parted,
kamu sabite	it has stood, godlike,
takaku tōtoki	lofty and noble,
Suruga naru	the high peak of Fuji
Fuji no takane o	in Suruga;
ama no hara	when I look up to see it
furisake mireba	in heaven's high plain,
wataru hi no	hidden is the light
kage mo kakurai	of the sky-crossing sun,

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teru tsuki no	invisible the glow
hikari mo miezu	of the shining moon;
shirakumo mo	even the white clouds
iyuki habakari	fear to move over it,
tokijiku so	and for all time
yuki wa furikeru	the snows are falling;
kataritsugi	let us tell about it,
iitsugi yukamu	and pass on the word
Fuji no takane wa	of Fuji's high peak.

hanka	Envoy
Tago no ura yu	Going out on Tago Bay,
uchiidete mireba	when I look
mashiro ni so	it is pure white;
Fuji no takane ni	on the high peak of Fuji
yuki wa furikeru	snow is falling.

Having Climbed Kamuoka

Another of Akahito's most famous poems expresses nostalgia for the "old capital / at Asuka" (the Fujiwara capital from 694 to 710). Although the date of the poem is unclear, judging from Akahito's other poems, it is probably from the beginning of Emperor Shōmu's reign. In 710, during the reign of Shōmu's grandmother Genmei, the capital was moved to Nara. The occasion of the poem also is unclear. Some scholars assume that it was Akahito himself who climbed the mountain and felt nostalgia for the old capital of Asuka. Several factors suggest otherwise, however. First, the act of climbing a sacred mountain and looking over the land was, as in Jomei's poem on climbing Mount Kagu (1:2), an act that symbolized the sovereign's power over the land. Second, the expression "Ever and ever, / like the hemlock firs" (*tsuga no ki no iya tsugitsugi ni*) is a formula referring to the genealogy of the emperors, as in Hitomaro's poem on the ruined Ōmi capital. Moreover, because Shōmu's father, Monmu, had reigned from the Asuka (Fujiwara) capital, it seems reasonable to assume that there is more to the poem than Akahito's feeling nostalgic. In fact, it has some similarities to Hitomaro's poem on Prince Karu going hunting on the Aki fields (1:45), in which Prince Karu (later Emperor Monmu) and the accompanying courtiers remember "the past" (Prince Karu's father, Kusakabe) and Prince Karu follows in his father's footsteps. In this poem, although Emperor Shōmu is not explicitly mentioned, there is a sense that the Nara courtiers are "remembering the past" of the Asuka capital, thereby implicitly connecting Shōmu to his father, Monmu. The poem praises the scenery of the old capital of Asuka and, at the end, expresses sorrow for its passing. The envoy then states that the subject's "longing" lingers like the mist that hangs over the Asuka River. Although the concept of "longing" originates in love poetry or exchanges (*sōmon*), here it is used metaphorically, in the sense of "longing for the past."

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3:324–325

Having climbed Kamuoka, a poem by Yamabe no Akahito, with one short poem.

mimoro no	Ever and ever,
kamunabiyama ni	like the hemlock firs
io e sashi	growing so thickly
shiji ni oitaru	with countless branches
tsuga no ki no	on the holy hill,
iya tsugitsugi ni	the abode of the gods,
tamakazura	without pause,
tayuru koto naku	like jeweled vines,
aritsutsu mo	always and ever
yamazu kayowamu	may we ceaselessly visit
Asuka no	the old capital
furuki miyako wa	at Asuka.
yama takami	Its mountains are tall,
kawa tōshiroshi	its river is splendid:
haru no hi wa	on spring days
yama shi migahoshi	we long to look on the mountains;
aki no yo wa	on autumn nights,
kawa shi sayakeshi	the river runs clear.
asakumo ni	In the morning clouds,
tazu wa midare	the cranes scatter;
yūgiri ni	in the evening mists,
kawazu wa sawaku	the frogs sing out.
miru goto ni	At each of these things
ne nomi shi nakayu	we must cry out and weep,
inishie omoeba	thinking of the past.

Asukagawa	Like the mists that rise
kawa yodo sarazu	and linger above the pools
tatsu kiri no	of the Asuka River,
omoisugubeki	mine is a longing
koi ni aranaku ni	that will not fade away.

The Palace at Yoshino

Akahito wrote three long poems on the occasion of visits of Emperor Shōmu to Yoshino, of which the first and most famous is translated here. Although Yoshino had been a site of great importance during Empress Jitō's reign, after Emperor Monmu's visit in 702 there were no official visits to Yoshino until 723, when Shōmu's mother, Genshō, visited Yoshino in the last year of her reign before she abdicated in favor of her son. Shōmu visited Yoshino several times during his reign, and this poem is thought to

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have been composed on the occasion of his first visit, in the Fifth Month of 724, two months after his accession to the throne.

This poem is often thought to have been strongly influenced by Hitomaro's Yoshino poems, but perhaps it would be more exact to say that Akahito's poem is a kind of sequel to Hitomaro's Yoshino set. Whereas Hitomaro's Yoshino poems articulate something new—a new order in which Jitō is a divine sovereign—Akahito's poem is intent on articulating the continuity of the old order. In Hitomaro's first Yoshino poem, the mountain and river are used as metaphors of temporal and spatial transcendence (see *Man'yōshū* 1:36) to describe the *present* state of Jitō's reign. In Akahito's poem, however, they are used as metaphors of continuity with the *past*. Yoshino stands still, ceaselessly repeating itself in time: just as the courtiers of Jitō's reign came "unceasingly" (see 1:36–37), so those of Shōmu's reign in Akahito's poem "ceaselessly . . . always come." In fact, there had been no official visit to Yoshino for twenty-two years. But Akahito's poem articulates a continuum between the courtiers of Jitō's reign and those of Shōmu's reign; that is, the "courtiers" of Akahito's poem refer to both those of the Shōmu court, like himself, and those of the Jitō and Monmu courts. The two envoys focus on the singing of the birds in the mountains of Yoshino. The plover (in the second envoy) is a bird associated with recalling the past.

6:923–925

yasumishishi	The palace at Yoshino,
wago ōkimi no	so splendidly built
takashirasu	by our lord who rules
Yoshino no miya wa	the eight corners of the earth:
tatanazuku	layer upon layer
aokakigomori	of green walls surround it;
kawanami no	turning and winding
kiyoki kafuchi so	the bright river runs.
haruhe ni wa	In the springtime,
hana sakioori	many blossoms bloom;
aki sareba	when autumn comes,
kiri tachiwataru	mist fills the air.
sono yama no	As the mountains rise
iya masumasu ni	endlessly,
kono kawa no	as the river runs
tayuru koto naku	ceaselessly,
momoshiki no	so to this palace
ōmiyahito wa	of a hundred blocks
tsune ni kayowamu	shall the courtiers always come.
miyoshino no	In beautiful Yoshino's
Kisayama no ma no	Kisa Mountains,

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konure ni wa	in the tops of the trees,
kokoda mo sawaku	how many, how noisy,
tori no koe kamo	the voices of birds.

nubatama no yo no	As the berry black
fukeyukeba	night grows deeper,
hisagi ouru	on the clear river's banks
kiyoki kawara ni	where oak trees grow
chidori shiba naku	over and over the plovers cry.

Four Poems

Scholars have long debated the significance of the following set of four poems, which appear to be metaphoric. The most convincing interpretation is that the first two poems are in the voice of a man, and the second two, in that of a woman. In the first poem the "violets" refer to the woman. To "pluck" flowers is often used as a metaphor for a man sleeping with a woman. In the third and fourth, the woman "pours cold water" (or, in this case, "snow") on the man's hopes of meeting her. The humor in the poems suggests that they were probably presented at a poem banquet at court. All four poems feature spring imagery, but the chronological order is reversed in their arrangement, so that those poems with early spring images, such as plum blossoms and spring greens, follow those with later spring images, such as violets and cherry blossoms.

8:1424–1427

Four poems by Yamabe no Akahito.

haru no no ni	To the spring fields
sumire tsumi ni to	I came to pluck violets;
koshi ware so	entranced by those fields,
no o natsukashimi	I slept there
hitoyo nenikeru	all night!

ashihiki no	Cherry blossoms of
yamasakurabana	the far, foot-dragging hills:[72]
hi narabete	if they bloomed thus,
kakushi sakeraba	for days on end,
hada koime ya mo	would we yearn for them as much?

waga seko ni	The plum blossoms
misemu to omoishi	I thought to show

72. *Ashihiki no* is a conventional pillow word for *yama* (mountains). Although its meaning is unclear, it is sometimes taken to mean "foot dragging" or "foot wearying."

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ume no hana	to you, my love,
sore to mo miezu	cannot be told apart
yuki no furereba	from the falling snow.[73]

asu yori wa	Even on the roped-off fields
haruna tsumamu to	where from tomorrow
shimeshi no ni	spring greens will be gathered,
kinō mo kyō mo	yesterday and again today
yuki wa furitsutsu	snow falls on and on.[74]

[Introductions by Torquil Duthie and translations by Anne Commons]

YAMANOUE NO OKURA

Perhaps because of his low rank, nothing is known about the first half of Yamanoue no Okura's life (660?–733?). In 701, however, at the age of forty-two, he was selected to go on an embassy to the Tang court in China, where he spent seven years. In 721 he was appointed as one of Emperor Shōmu's tutors, and in 726 (at the age of sixty-seven), probably as a reward for a lifetime of service to the court, he was appointed governor of Chikuzen, in northern Tsukushi (present-day Kyushu), where he organized a poetic circle with the Dazaifu commander, Ōtomo no Tabito, another major *Man'yōshū* poet. Volume 5 of the *Man'yōshū*, which is thought to have been compiled by Okura, is dedicated to the poetry of this circle in Tsukushi.

Okura is one of the *Man'yōshū*'s most idiosyncratic poets. Even though all the poets in the *Man'yōshū* could read and were familiar with the Chinese classics, Okura took almost all the topics of his poems from Chinese texts, and many of his poems include long prefaces in Chinese. His poetry has a strong philosophical content (Buddhist, Confucianist, Daoist), and his choice of themes, such as old age or love for one's children, was often unusual.

Dialogue with the Impoverished

Okura's "Dialogue with the Impoverished" is perhaps his best known poem and clearly shows his unique place in the *Man'yōshū*. The structure of the poem is unconven-

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73. *Waga seko*, here translated as "my love," was typically used by women to address a male relative or lover. Its use here marks the speaker of this poem as female. In its conceit of confusion between blossoms and snow, this poem prefigures the technique of *mitate*, or visual metaphor, which was widely used in Heian-period poetry.

74. The image of snow links this poem to the one preceding it, and the reference to fields where plants may be plucked (in this case, the new herbs picked in early spring) ties this poem back to the first poem, giving the sequence a circular structure.

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tional, with two chōka in the form of a dialogue, capped by a hanka (envoy). The poem's form as a dialogue is probably derived from a Chinese model and can be found in the Chinese poetry of the *Kaifūsō* (751), Japan's oldest collection of Chinese poetry (*kanshi*). This poem is the only such example in the *Man'yōshū*.

Even more unusual is the subject matter of this poem, poverty. Okura probably drew inspiration at least in part from Chinese poetry, particularly that by Tao Qian. Although the theme of poverty also is found in Chinese poetry composed in Japan, its use in a Japanese poem was unique to Okura. Further testament to the poem's uniqueness is the vocabulary, which includes thirty terms used nowhere else in the *Man'yōshū*.

The poem has long been interpreted as a dialogue between a poor man and an even poorer man. But in recent years, whether or not the first speaker is actually poor has been called into question. Items such as the "rock salt" and "lees / of saké in hot water," which offer comfort to the first speaker, would probably not have been available to the poor during the Nara period and are in fact associated with officials of low rank. The first speaker thus may not be truly poor but merely frustrated in his ambition for higher rank and glory, looking at poverty as an outsider, as someone who feels he has had a taste of suffering. This attitude is suggested in his proud claim "Aside from me alone, / no man is worthy." The official's concern for, but superficial understanding of, poverty therefore shows the contrast between Confucian sympathy for the impoverished and the dismal conditions of those who actually were poor.

The tendency to search for sources of poetic inspiration in Okura's own life has given rise to speculation that the first speaker might be Okura himself. Many scholars have suggested that Okura may have been poor before his participation in the embassy to China, when he was without rank. The fact that Okura held posts as a regional governor, first in Hōki (now Tottori) and later in Chikuzen (now Fukuoka), also raises the possibility that he had had personal experience in dealing with the poor, and some scholars believe that Okura himself is the "headman" in the second half of the poem, adding to the poor man's burdens by demanding taxes.

The envoy despairs at the inability of humans to find freedom from the pain of life, suggesting a Buddhist undertone. The line "Lucky to be born / in the world of men" in the second chōka, for example, reflects the belief that one's lot in life is determined by karma from previous lives. Since only human beings can achieve enlightenment, the destitute man understands that he should feel fortunate to have been born a man, and yet the reality of his situation does not inspire gratitude. The Buddhist release symbolized by the bird in the envoy is denied him because of his worldly responsibilities to work, "as all men do," in order to care for his parents, wife, and child. This theme of conflict between Confucian familial obligation and Buddhist rejection of worldly attachments is a common one in Okura's poetry and is also found in his poem "On Thinking of Children."

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5:892–893

Dialogue with the Impoverished, with a short poem.

kaze majiri	On nights the wind
ame furu yo no	mingles with the falling rain,
ame majiri	nights the rain
yuki furu yo wa	mingles with the falling snow,
sube mo naku	nothing can be done
samuku shiareba	against the bitter cold,
katashio o	and so I nibble
toritsuzu shiroi	a lump of rock salt
kasuyuzake	and sip the lees
uchisusuroite	of saké in hot water,
shiwabukai	clear my throat,
hana bishi bishi ni	sniff, sniff back my running nose,
shika to aranu	and stroke my whiskers,
hige kakinadete	barely even a beard,
are o okite	as I say with pride,
hito wa araji to	"Aside from me alone,
hokoroedo	no man is worthy," and yet
samuku shiareba	against the bitter cold
asabusama	I pull my hempen
hikikagafuri	quilt tight around me
nuno kataginu	and pile on
ari no kotogoto	every single cloth vest
kisoedomo	that I own, but still
samuki yo sura o	the night is cold as ever.
ware yori mo	And what of those
mazushiki hito no	less fortunate than I?
chichi haha wa	Your father and mother
uekoyuramu	must be starving in the cold.
mekodomo wa	Your wife and children
kou kou naku ramu	must be crying out "food, food."
kono toki wa	At times like these,
ika ni shitsutsu ka	how do you ever manage
na ga yo wa wataru	to make your way through life?
ametsuchi wa	Heaven and earth
hiroshi to iedo	are said to be so vast,
a ga tame wa	but for me
saku ya narinuru	have they constricted so?
hitsuki wa	The sun and moon
akashi to iedo	are said to be so bright,

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a ga tame wa	but for me
teri ya tamawanu	do they fail to shine?
hito mina ka	Are all men thus,
a nomi ya shikaru	or is it only so for me?
wakuraba ni	Lucky to be born
hito to wa aru o	in the world of men, and yet . . .
hitonami ni	I work and toil
are mo tsukuru o	as all men do, and yet . . .
wata mo naki	my cloth vest,
nuno kataginu no	without even any padding,
miru no goto	dangles off my body
wawake sagareru	like tattered strands of seaweed,
kakafu nomi	scraps of cloth
kata ni uchikake	wrapped around my shoulders.
fuseio no	In my crumbling
mageio no uchi ni	broken down little hut,
hita tsuchi ni	I spread out straw
wara toki shikite	for bedding on the bare earth.
chichi haha wa	Father and mother
makura no kata ni	are there beside my pillow,
mekodomo wa	wife and children
ato no kata ni	are there at my feet,
kakumi ite	all huddled together
re e samayoi	whimpering with grief.
kamado ni wa	In the stove,
hoke fukitatezu	there is no sign of flame.
koshiki ni wa	In the pot,
kumo no su kakite	a spider has spun its web.
iikashiku	We have forgotten even
koto mo wasurete	what it is to cook rice,
nuedori no	and our helpless cries
nodoyoi oru ni	are weak as the voice of thrushes.
itonokite	Then, worse yet,
mijikaki mono o	"trimming the ends of a thing
hashi kiru to	already too short,"
ieru ga gotoku	as the saying goes,
shimoto toru	there comes the voice
sato osa ga koe wa	of the headman with his whip,
neyado made	reaching into my bedroom
kitachi yobainu	to call me out to him.
kaku bakari	Is this all?
subenaki mono ka	Is this helplessness all there is
yo no naka no michi	of our path through this life?

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hanka	Envoy
yo no naka o	We may believe
ushi to yasashi to	that grief and shame are all
omoedomo	there is of the world,
tobitachikanetsu	but because we are not birds
tori ni shi araneba	we cannot simply fly away.

Presented with deep humility by Yamanoue no Okura.

On Thinking of Children

"On Thinking of Children" is the second of three poems presented together by Okura in the Kama district of Chikuzen in 728, which are known collectively as "Three Compositions at Kama" (Kama sanbusaku). This second set of poems is well known as an expression of Okura's recurring theme of parental love. The chōka seems to be a straightforward expression of longing for children by a father who is separated from them, and the envoy describes a parent's love for a child surpassing all worldly treasures. Finally, the inclusion of a preface in Chinese provides a Buddhist subtext for the poems and complicates Okura's feelings of parental love.

Okura begins the preface with two passages from Buddhist scripture, but he deliberately misinterprets the meaning of these quotations in order to turn them to his own purpose. The first passage emphasizes the unconditional love of Shakyamuni for all living creatures by comparing it with his love for Rahula, the son born to him before he renounced all worldly attachments. Okura, however, interprets this as an expression of Shakyamuni's personal love for his child rather than his universal love for all beings. In the second problematic quotation, for which a convincing source has not been identified, "love" refers to desire as a worldly attachment. If there is no greater love than that for one's child, then that love is the greatest obstacle to achieving enlightenment. Okura deduces from the two passages that even Shakyamuni himself, supposedly free from the entanglements and desires of the world, could not free himself of a parent's love.

Okura's poems thus represent the recognition that his love for his children is a worldly attachment and show his acceptance, or even embrace, of his inability to deny it. Okura's inability to sleep peacefully because of worrying about his children also reflects the hopelessness of Buddhist release if it requires relinquishing his attachment to his children. In the final reckoning, no treasure, not even the Buddhist seven treasures represented by silver, gold, and jewels, can match his love for his children. These comparisons of differing philosophies and questions about them in light of personal experience is typical of Okura, whose familiarity with Chinese sources was not necessarily matched by blind acceptance of their precepts.

This kind of complexity is possible only by means of the unconventional combining of Chinese preface and Japanese poems, a common construction for Okura but rare outside the Tsukushi poetry circle. If one were to read the poems without the preface,

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it would be easy to interpret them simply as an expression of parental love. Rather, it is the inclusion of a Chinese preface that calls attention to the contradictory ideals of Confucian familial duty and Buddhist release from desire.

5:802–803

On Thinking of Children (with preface).

Shakyamuni, the Thus-Come Buddha, with his golden mouth preached, "I care for all living creatures as for my son Rahula." He also preached, "Of love, none surpasses that for one's child." If even the wisest of holy sages had a heart filled with love for his child, who among us mere mortal beings[75] could not help but love his child?

uri hameba	Eating melons,
kodomo omōyu	I remember my children.
kuri hameba	Eating chestnuts,
mashite shinowayu	I miss them all the more.
izuku yori	From what source
kitarishi mono zo	do these visions come to me?
manakai ni	Before my eyes
motona kakarite	they uselessly taunt me,
yasui shi isanu	not letting me sleep in peace.

hanka	Envoy
shirogane mo	Not silver,
kugane mo tama mo	or gold, or precious jewels,
nani semu ni	could ever match
masareru takara	the far greater treasure
ko ni shikame ya mo	that is one's own child.

Poem on Departing a Banquet

Okura's "Poem on Departing a Banquet" has long been held up as further evidence of the love for family evoked in his "On Thinking of Children." The image of Okura leaving a banquet early, unable to put thoughts of wife and child out of his mind, fits in well with the popular view of him as a sentimental poet motivated by love of family. Along with Okura's many other poems mentioning children, it has spurred much biographical speculation regarding the possibility that Okura had a young child at such an advanced age.

75. Literally, "the green grass of the world."

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In recent years, however, a more complex interpretation has been suggested. The verb used by Okura meaning "depart" (*makaru*) is not usually used in the simple sense of "to leave" but, more commonly, to refer to departing from the imperial court or retiring from court service. In this sense, Okura's poem may be a statement about the sacrifice of one's familial duties that must be made for public service. The wife and child he imagines crying for him are not merely waiting for him to return from a banquet but are waiting for him to return home after a long absence. To a group of nobles stationed in remote Tsukushi, longing for one's home in the capital was a common theme, which must have resonated in Okura's desire to return to home and family.

3:337

Poem by Yamanoue no Okura on Departing a Banquet.

Okurara wa	And now Okura
ima wa makaramu	really must be departing.
ko nakuramu	My children must be
sore sono haha mo	crying, and their mother too
wa o matsuramu so	must await my return.

[Introduction and translations by Jeremy Robinson]

ŌTOMO NO TABITO

The Ōtomo family was an illustrious one, with generations of service to the imperial family, and before Tabito (665–731) became known as a poet, he already would have been known in court circles. He was well versed in Chinese poetry and participated in Prince Nagaya's poetry circle, with several of his Chinese poetry compositions included in the *Kaifūsō* poetry collection. Nearly all his Japanese poems, however, were written late in his life, and only two of his poems from the time before his appointment as commander of Dazaifu in Tsukushi (modern Kyushu) in 728 are included in the *Man'yōshū*. While in Tsukushi, Tabito hosted a group of poets distinguished by their familiarity and experimentation with Chinese models. Along with Yamanoue no Okura, Tabito was active in creating forms that combined Chinese prefaces with Japanese poetry and incorporating Chinese themes in Japanese poetry. Tabito also experimented with poetry sequences, both those of group authorship such as his poetic letter exchanges and those composed on his own, like the following poems in praise of saké.

Thirteen Poems in Praise of Saké

The placement of Tabito's series "Thirteen Poems in Praise of Saké" immediately following Okura's "Poem on Departing a Banquet" in volume 3 is certainly no acci-

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dent. At times, Tabito seems to have enjoyed playing the "live for the moment" Daoist opposite Okura's dour Confucianism, and Tabito's poem sequence here is in many ways a response to poems presented to him by Okura. While Okura praised children as "treasures beyond price," in Tabito's poems 345 and 346, the greatest treasure is saké. And while Okura spoke of future Buddhist rebirth, Tabito dismissed it in favor of the pleasures of the present in poems 348 and 349. In fact, Tabito's criticism of those who put on airs of false wisdom in poems 341 and 344 has sometimes been interpreted as a direct jab at Okura's Confucian preaching.

Although references to the ceremonial and ritualistic uses of saké were common in Tabito's time, his praise of saké is of a different type altogether, owing more to famous Six Dynasties Chinese tipplers than to the sacred nature of saké in Japan. This is made clear by the reference to seven wise ones in poem 340, which places Tabito's poems in the tradition of the Seven Sages of the Bamboo Grove, famous for their excessive drinking, engaging in "pure talk," and flouting of society's mores in the Western Jin dynasty (265–316). For Tabito, as for these sages, saké held the key to the truth, cutting through false wisdom, purifying the heart, and bringing release through "giving way to drunken tears."

A sequence of so many poems on one theme by a single poet is unprecedented in the *Man'yōshū*, and it is uncertain to what extent the sequence should be viewed as a single composite poem. Tabito may have been using the poetry sequence in the same way that Okura used the combination of Chinese preface, long poem, and short poem in order to deal with more complex themes. For example, some have compared the function of poems 339 through 346 with that of a long poem and the last four poems with its envoy, and others have divided the combination differently, comparing the references to Chinese sources in poems 339 and 340 with Okura's Chinese prefaces. Another possible structure sees the first poem as an introduction to the theme and divides the remaining poems into four sets of three, corresponding to the traditional Chinese poetic structure called *ki-shō-ten-ketsu*, or "introduction, development, twist, conclusion." Whatever the intended structure, Tabito's use of multiple poems dealing with different aspects of a single larger topic enabled him to achieve a depth of meaning far more complex than would have been possible using only a single poem.

3:338–350

Thirteen Poems in Praise of Saké by Lord Ōtomo, Dazaifu Commander.

338

shirushi naki	To turn your thoughts
mono o omowazu wa	from matters of no importance,
hitotsuki no	it is best
nigoreru sake o	to drink a single cup
nomubeku aru rashi	of cloudy unfiltered saké.

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339

sake no na o	Calling saké
hijiri to ohoseshi	by the name "sage"—
inishie no	how appropriate
ōki hijiri no	the word chosen
koto no yoroshisa	by the great ancient sages.[76]

340

inishie no	In ancient times
nana no sakashiki	there were seven wise ones.
hito domo mo	What those men too
horiseshi mono wa	wanted above all else
sake ni shi aru rashi	seems to have been saké.

341

sakashimi to	Rather than preaching,
mono iu yori wa	and playing the wise man,
sake nomite	it is far better
einaki suru shi	to drink some saké and
masaritaru rashi	give way to drunken tears.

342

iwamu sube	What can I say?
semu sube shirazu	I know not what to do
kiwamarite	to describe it:
tōtoki mono wa	wonderful beyond all else
sake ni shi aru rashi	is that thing they call saké.

343

nakanaka ni	Rather than being
hito to arazu wa	only a mere human,
sakatsubo ni	if only I could
narinite shika mo	become a saké flask
sake ni shiminamu	and be soaked in saké.

344

ana miniku	How pathetic!
sakashira o su to	Playing the learned sage,

76. During the prohibition of the Wei dynasty (220–264), "sage" was used by drinkers as a code word for saké.

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sake nomanu drinking no saké . . .
hito o yoku miba but just look at him closely;
saru ni ka mo niru doesn't he look like a monkey?

345

atai naki You may speak
takara to iu to mo of treasures beyond price.
hitotsuki no How can they
nigoreru sake ni match a single cup
ani masame ya mo of cloudy unfiltered saké?

346

yoru hikaru You may speak
tama to iu to mo of jewels shining in the night.
sake nomite How can they
kokoro o yaru ni compare to drinking saké
ani shikame ya mo and cleansing one's heart?

347

yo no naka no Along the way
asobi no michi ni of merriment in this world,
suzushiku wa it must be
einaki suru ni that giving way to drunken tears
aru bekaru rashi is what provides relief.

348

kono yo ni shi During this lifetime,
tanoshiku araba as long as there is pleasure,
komu yo ni wa then in the next life
mushi ni tori ni mo I might as well become
ware wa narinamu an insect or a bird.

349

ikeru mono If it is a fact
tsui ni mo shinuru that all things that live
mono ni areba must someday die,
kono yo naru ma wa then while I am in this life
tanoshiku o arana let me enjoy myself.

350

moda orite Your smug silence,
sakashira suru wa playing the learned sage,

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sake nomite	cannot compare
einaki suru ni	to drinking saké and
nao shikazukeri	giving way to drunken tears.

[Introduction and translations by Jeremy Robinson]

FOURTH PERIOD

The *Man'yōshū*'s fourth period extended from 733 to 759, the year of its last dated poem, and is mainly represented by the poetry of Ōtomo no Yakamochi (718?–785), who is thought to have been the main final compiler. This period, which includes the reigns of Shōmu (724–749) and Kōken (749–758), can be subdivided into periods from 733 to 744, when some of the poets of the third period were still active, and from 744 to 759, when the practice of writing Japanese poetry (*uta*) seems to have declined. The last four volumes of the *Man'yōshū* (compiled after 744) appear to be a diarylike record of the poetry of Ōtomo no Yakamochi and his acquaintances and are thought to have been added to a preexisting collection of sixteen volumes. In addition to composing exchange and seasonal poems, Yakamochi, like Akahito, looked back to Hitomaro's poetry and composed long poems on imperial excursions and other poems of praise. However, unlike Akahito, Yakamochi was not actually a court poet, and most of these poems were never presented to the court.

ŌTOMO NO YAKAMOCHI

Ōtomo no Yakamochi (718?–785) was a son of Ōtomo no Tabito (665–731), another major *Man'yōshū* poet. Yakamochi was born in Nara but grew up in Dazaifu (in Kyushu), where his father was governor. In the winter of 730, Tabito was promoted to major counselor, and the Ōtomo family returned to Nara, to their estate in Saho. However, Tabito died the very next year, at the age of sixty-seven, when Yakamochi was fourteen years old. Until Yakamochi came of age, his aunt Lady Sakanoue (Ōtomo no Sakanoue), the most notable female poet in the *Man'yōshū*, apparently acted as his guardian and the head of the clan. Although Yakamochi's early poetic influences seem to have come from his aunt, he also was influenced by the poetry of his father, Okura, and other poets in the Dazaifu poetic circle.

Yakamochi was employed at court from 737 to 744. In 737, when he entered court service, there was a devastating epidemic of smallpox that killed several court officials, including the leaders of all four branches of the Fujiwara clan. The resulting reappointments of government posts left Yakamochi in a fairly strong position, with Tachibana no Moroe, an ally of the Ōtomo clan, as major counselor. But then in 740, Fujiwara no Hirotsugu led a revolt from which Emperor Shōmu (r. 724–749) and his court had to flee from the capital in Nara. Although the revolt was eventually subdued, Shōmu decided to move the capital to Kuni. At this time, Yakamochi entered the service of Prince Asaka, Shōmu's son, who was second in line to the throne but died young, in 744.

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Yakamochi returned to Nara after Asaka's death, and his activities from 744 to 746 are unknown, but scholars believe he compiled the first sixteen volumes of the *Man'yōshū* during this time.

In 745 the capital was moved back to Nara, and in 746 Yakamochi was appointed governor of Etchū (present-day Toyama Prefecture), on the Japan Sea, a post he held until 751. The Etchū years were the period during which Yakamochi was most prolific as a poet. Three whole volumes of the *Man'yōshū* (17–19) are dedicated to his poetry and that of his associates in Etchū. In 749 Shōmu abdicated in favor of his daughter, Empress Kōken (r. 749–758), and in 751 Yakamochi returned to court with the appointment of junior counselor (*shō-nagon*). Owing to the Fujiwara connections of Empress Kōken, the Tachibana/Ōtomo faction lost much of its influence at court. The death of the retired emperor Shōmu in 756 and of Tachibana no Moroe in 757 made the Kōken/Fujiwara faction even stronger and prompted a rebellion by Moroe's son Naramaro. The plot was discovered, and its members were put to death. Yakamochi had deliberately kept himself away from the plot, but because of his connection to the plotters, the next year he was appointed governor of Inaba (present-day Tottori Prefecture), a post far inferior to the one he had held in Etchū. There he composed the last poem included in the *Man'yōshū*, in the new year of 759. In 762 he returned to the capital, was involved in a failed plot with Fujiwara no Yoshitsugu, and was sent away again, this time to be governor of Satsuma.

In 770, with the accession of Emperor Kōnin, Yakamochi came back into favor but was involved in several more revolts, and in 785, during the reign of Emperor Kanmu (781–806), he died, at the age of sixty-seven, in a plot involving Kanmu's brother, Crown Prince Sawara. When the plot was discovered, Yakamochi's remains were stripped of rank and his property and estate confiscated. Scholars assume that this "property" included the *Man'yōshū* manuscript. In 797 the capital moved to Heian, and in 806 Kanmu died and all the conspirators were posthumously pardoned.

On the Death of a Concubine

One of Yakamochi's most famous chōka is part of a series of poems he composed on the death of a concubine in 739. Yakamochi was twenty-two years old at the time. As in almost all banka in the *Man'yōshū* since Hitomaro, death is expressed as vanishing into nature. The poem also includes a number of formulaic expressions that appear in the works of other poets. What perhaps is unusual in Yakamochi's poem is the motif of the flowers that remind him of his dead lover.

3:466–469

Another poem composed by Yakamochi, with three short poems.

wa ga yado ni	All around my house
hana so sakitaru	flowers are gaily blooming;
so o miredo	yet though I look at them

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kokoro mo yukazu	there is no lifting in my heart.
hashikiyashi	Ah, my beloved—
imo ga ariseba	If she were here alive today,
mikamo nasu	like ducks in the water
futari narabii	we two would be side by side;
taorite mo	we would pick blossoms
misemashi mono o	and show them to each other.
utsusemi no	But our locust-husk
kareru mi nareba	bodies are but borrowed flesh:
tsuyu shimo no	it melts away
kenuru ga gotoku	and vanishes like dew or frost.
ashihiki no	To the foot-weary
yamaji o sashite	mountain paths she made her way,
irihi sashi	and like the setting sun
kakurinishikaba	hid herself behind the hills.
soko omou ni	When I think of this
mune koso itaki	my breast is fraught with pain,
ii mo ezu	but I cannot speak,
nazuke mo shirazu	I cannot find a name for it.
ato mo naki	Since ours is a world
yo no naka nareba	that will leave no trace behind,
semu sube mo nashi	there is nothing I can do.
toki mo nashi	When there would be times
itsu mo aramu o	more than enough for such a thing,
kokoro itaku	why did my darling
iyuku wagimo ga	bring me this grief by her going,
midoriko o okite	leaving our greenling behind?
idete yuku	If I had but known
michi shiramaseba	the road my love would take away,
arakajime	before she could have gone
imo o todomemu	I would have put a barrier
seki mo okamashi o	across to hold her back.
imo ga mishi	Flowers are in bloom
yado ni hana saki	in the garden that she knew,
toki wa henu	and time goes by;
wa ga naku namita	but still there has been no drying
imada hinaku ni	of the tears I shed for her.

An Exchange with the Elder Daughter of Lady Sakanoue

Shortly after the death of his concubine, Yakamochi began courting his cousin, the elder daughter of Lady Sakanoue, Sakanoue no Ōratsume. We have no precise date

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for the following exchange, but given its placement in volume 4 of the *Man'yōshū*, it would most likely have taken place at the end of 739. Ōratsume sends Yakamochi three conventional poems, complaining of his lack of attention, complaining of their circumstances, and expressing her devotion. Yakamochi answers each of Ōratsume's poems in reverse order, in each case turning the main motif of each of her poems into a pledge of his devotion for her.

4:729–734

Three poems by Sakanoue no Ōratsume to Ōtomo no Yakamochi.

tama naraba	Were you a string of beads
te ni mo makamu o	I would wind you about my arm,
utsusemi no	but since you are a man
yo no hito nareba	of the actual, mortal world
te ni makigatashi	you are hard in the winding.

awamu yo wa	When we could have met
itsu mo aramu o	any time, any night,
nani su to ka	why did we do it—
sono yoi aite	Why did we choose that night to meet,
koto no shigeki mo	and all this thicket of talk?

wa ga na wa mo	Let this name of mine
china no io na ni	be bandied on five hundred
tachinu to mo	or a thousand tongues;
kimi ga na tataba	but if rumor touched your name
oshimi koso nake	I would weep for very rage.

Three more poems in reply by Ōtomo no Yakamochi.

ima shi wa shi	There is in me now,
na no oshikeku mo	oh, now indeed, no remnant
ware wa nashi	of care about my name
imo ni yorite wa	though rumor rise a thousand times
chitabi tatsu to mo	because of my young love.

utsusemi no	Through the locust-husk
yo ya mo futayuku	world do we pass twice over?
nani su to ka	What am I doing,
imo ni awazute	sleeping all alone at night,
a ga hitori nemu	never meeting my young love?

wa ga omoi	Than that my longing
kakute arazu wa	should be thus, it were better
tama ni mo ga	to be a bead string,

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makoto mo imo ga	truly to be wound around
te ni makaremu o	the arm of my young love!

Poems Composed at Etchū

Yakamochi composed the following six tanka when he was governor of Etchū Province (746–751). The first poem (no. 4139), which is Yakamochi's most famous work, and the third (no. 4143) are original for the way in which they describe a large scene before circling in on the main point in the last lines. The second poem is similar to the visual conceits that are typical of the later poetry of the *Kokinshū* (ca. 905). The three last poems focus on sounds heard at night. The fourth and fifth poems are on the plover, a bird associated with remembering the past. In this instance, hearing the sound of the plover is a metaphor for hearing the poetry of the past.

19:4139–4140

Two poems composed on gazing at the blossoms of the peach and damson trees in my spring garden, on the evening of the first day of the Third Month of the second year of Tenpyō–Shōhō [750].

haru no sono	My whole spring arbor
kurenai niou	radiates a crimson glow:
momo no hana	blossoms of the peach
shitaderu michi ni	shine down on the garden path
idetatsu otome	where a maiden steps in view.

wa ga sono no	Is it the blossom
sumomo no hana ka	of the damson in my arbor
niwa ni chiru	scattered in the yard,
hadare no imada	or a dusting of snowflakes
nokoritaru ka mo	that still lingers on the ground?

19:4143

A poem on plucking a pink sweet-lily.

mononofu no	The eighty maidens
yaso otomera ga	busy as the officers at court,
kumimagau	bustle about
terai no ue no	drawing water from the temple well—
katakago no hana	where this pink sweet-lily blooms.

19:4146–4147

Two poems on hearing the plovers' cries during the night.

yogutachi ni	In the slack of the night
nezamete oreba	I lie awake, my heart grown

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kawase tome	helpless at the sound
kokoro mo shino ni	of plovers crying in the stream,
naku chidori kamo	seeking the shallow water.

yo kutachite	When the night grows slack
naku kawachidori	and the river plovers cry,
ube shi koso	it comes to me
mukashi no hito mo	how the men of old were moved
shinoishinikere	to sing in helpless longing.

19:4150

A poem on hearing far off the song of the boatmen going down the river.

asatoko no	Faint and far away
kikeba harokeshi	as I listen in my morning bed,
Imizugawa	from Imizu River
asakogi shitsutsu	comes the sound of boatmen singing,
utau funabito	rowing on the stream at dawn.

Poem Composed at Inaba

This is the last poem in the *Man'yōshū*. Composed on New Year's Day, it is an appropriately felicitous poem to conclude the collection. At the same time, it seems somewhat ironic, as Yakamochi's blessings had certainly not been accumulating and the public practice of Japanese poetry was about to go into decline for more than a century.

19:4516

A poem composed at a banquet for the provincial and district officials held at the government office of Inaba Province on the first day of the First Month of the third year [of Tenpyō–Hōji, 759].

aratashiki	Like the snow that first falls
toshi no hajime no	on this first day of the year
hatsuharu no	in early spring,
kyō furu yuki no	from today may our blessings
iyashike yogoto	accumulate evermore!

The preceding poem was composed by the governor,
Ōtomo no Yakamochi.

[Introductions by Torquil Duthie and translations by Edwin Cranston]

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Chapter 2

THE HEIAN PERIOD

The Heian period refers to the four hundred years from the end of the eighth century to the end of the twelfth century, when the center of political power was located in Heian-kyō, or the Heian capital (today known as Kyoto), from which the period takes its name. The political beginning of the Heian period can be traced to 781, when Emperor Kanmu (r. 781–806) ascended the throne. In 784, he moved the capital from Heijō (Nara) to Nagaoka and then in 794 to Heian-kyō. The end of the Heian period is usually considered to be 1185, when the Taira (Heike) clan was demolished and Minamoto no Yoritomo (1147–1199), the new military leader, established the *shugo/jitō* system and the Kamakura *bakufu* (military government) in eastern Japan.

The Heian period can be divided again, both politically and culturally, into three periods: early, middle, and late Heian. The first of these periods extended from the establishment of the Heian capital to the early tenth century through the reign of Emperor Daigo (r. 897–930); the second period lasted from Daigō's reign to the second half of the eleventh century, the reign of Emperor GoSanjō (r. 1068–1072); and the third period stretched from the latter half of the eleventh century to the establishment of the Kamakura bakufu. The first of these two periods, when the ritsuryō state system continued to function, at least in name, is sometimes regarded as the latter part of the ancient period, and the third period, when the *insei*, or cloistered emperor system, emerged, as the beginning of the medieval period.

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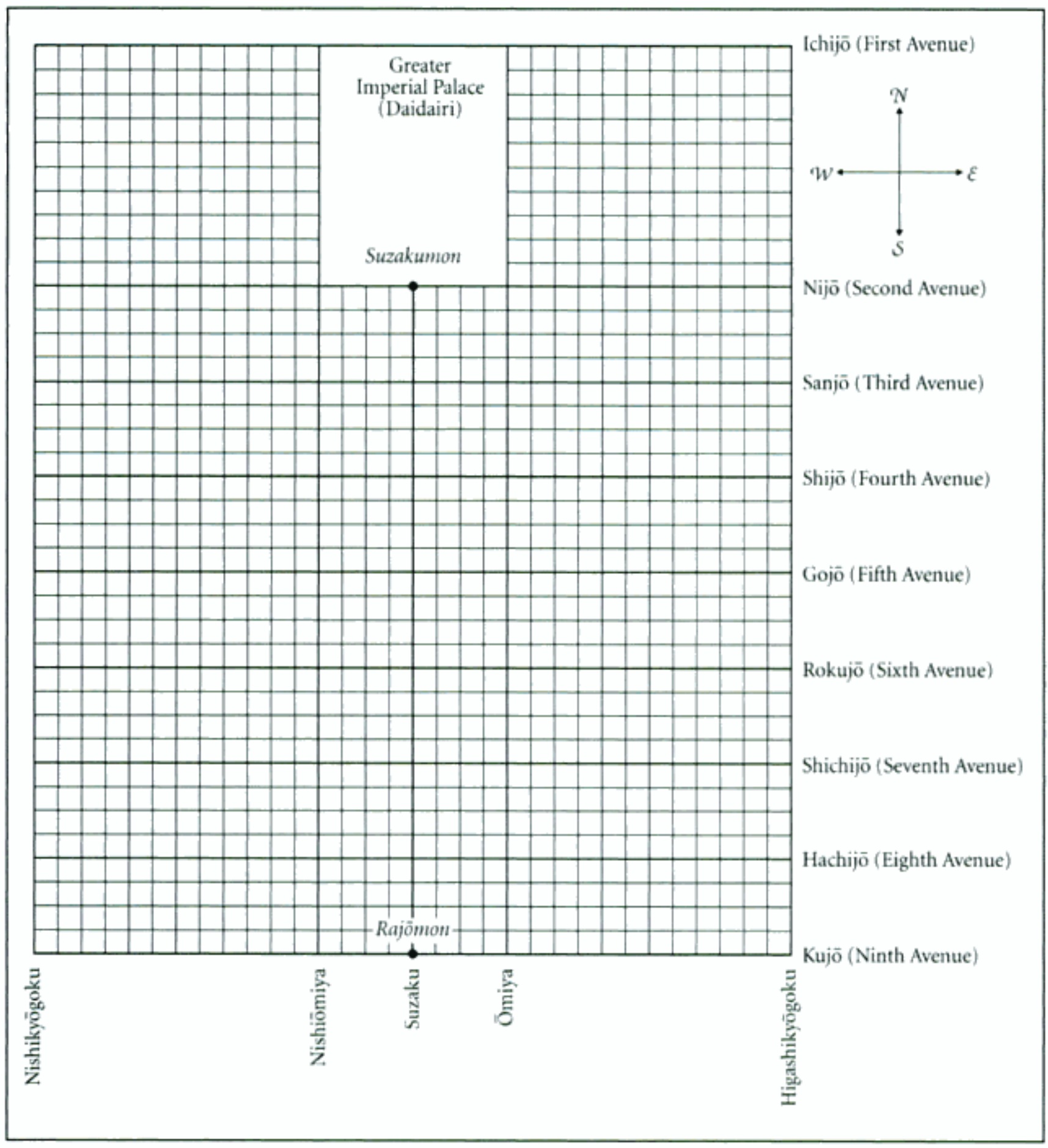

The Heian capital (Heian-kyō). The names of gates are in italics.

At the end of the eighth century the powerful aristocratic families that had been at the center of the ritsuryō state during the Nara period were gradually replaced by new aristocratic clans. By the mid-ninth century, the ranks of the nobility (*kugyō*) were dominated by the Fujiwara and Minamoto (Genji) clans. Within them, the northern branch of the Fujiwara eventually prevailed, and in the mid-Heian period, beginning in the latter half of the tenth century, they controlled the throne through the regent (*sekkan*) system, in which a Fujiwara regent ruled in place of a child emperor. By marrying their daughters to emperors, the Fujiwara became the uncles and grandfathers of future emperors, thereby placing them in the position to be the regents who ruled in place of the child emperor.

The northern branch of the Fujiwara came to the fore first with Fujiwara no Fuyutsugu (775–826). His son Yoshifusa became the regent (*sesshō*), a title he was officially given in 866 when Emperor Seiwa (r. 858–876) came to the throne at the young age of nine. During the Kanpyō era (889–898), Emperor

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Uda (r. 887–897), with the aid of Sugawara no Michizane (845–903), who became a major literary figure, managed to hold off the Fujiwara. Uda's son Emperor Daigo (r. 897–930), with the assistance of the minister of the left, Fujiwara no Tokihira, and Sugawara no Michizane, similarly attempted to return to direct imperial rule. Although this imperial restoration by Uda and Daigo ultimately failed, the Uda/Daigo reigns—often referred to as the Engi (901–923) era—were subsequently considered to be a golden age of direct imperial rule and cultural efflorescence. Emperor Daigo ordered the compilation of the *Kokinshū* (*Collection of Ancient and Modern Poems*, ca. 905), the first imperial anthology of native poetry (the thirty-one-syllable *waka*).

Even though the system of public land ownership gradually fell apart, the ritsuryō state system—with its apparatus of ranks, ministries, and university—continued to operate, at least in name, throughout the Heian period and supported a court-based state system, which emerged at the beginning of the tenth century. One of the major characteristics of this court-based state was the concentration of power in the hands of the provincial governors (*zuryō*). During the regency period, the nobility in the capital focused most of their attention on court rituals and little on the actual administration of the provinces. Consequently, the central government in the capital, while making the appointments and receiving tributes from the provinces, gradually lost direct administrative control of them, which resulted in increasing chaos there. In 939 two rebellions took place—one led by Taira no Masakado (d. 940) and the other by Fujiwara no Sumitomo—both of which were subdued. Meanwhile, the provincial governors, exploiting their positions as state appointees, gathered more and more wealth and power.

Emperor Daigo and his successor, Emperor Murakami (r. 946–967), managed to avoid Fujiwara regents, but their imperial successors were not so successful. In 967, with the accession of Emperor Reizei, Fujiwara no Saneyori became regent, leading to the institutionalization of the Fujiwara regency, which peaked between 995 and 1027, when Fujiwara no Michinaga (966–1027), the most powerful and successful regent, held sway. Michinaga's eldest daughter, Shōshi, became the empress and consort of Emperor Ichijō (r. 986–1011) and gave birth to two subsequent emperors: GoIchijō and GoSuzaku. Murasaki Shikibu probably wrote much of *The Tale of Genji* while serving as a lady-in-waiting to Empress Shōshi, while Sei Shōnagon, the author of *The Pillow Book*, was a lady-in-waiting to Empress Teishi, a consort of Emperor Ichijō and Shōshi's rival.

In the last half of the eleventh century, with the accession of Emperor GoSanjō (r. 1068–1072)—a sovereign who, for the first time in 170 years (since Emperor Uda's reign), did not have Fujiwara maternal relatives—the power of the Fujiwara regency suddenly declined. The retired emperor, Shirakawa (r. 1072–1086, 1053–1129), who relinquished the throne in 1086, established the retired or cloistered emperor (*insei*) system, in which the cloistered emperor

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controlled the emperor and held political power. Retired Emperor Shirakawa, who took religious vows in 1096, thus held control for forty-three years through three imperial reigns.

During the Heian period, the system of public land ownership established by the ritsuryō system gradually broke down, and by the third period, in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, it was replaced by a system of private estates (*shōen*), which became the foundation for a new, village-based society. The samurai, most of whom grew up in these villages, gained military strength, and by the latter half of the twelfth century the Taira (Heike), a military lineage, came into conflict with the cloistered emperors, who until then had controlled the throne. The Taira lineage took over the reins of the court government until they were, in turn, toppled by the Minamoto (Genji), a military lineage based in the east, in Kamakura, thereby bringing an end to the Heian period and ushering in the medieval period.

THE EMERGENCE OF KANA LITERATURE

The first period of the Heian era lasted for just over a hundred years, from 794, when the capital was moved to Heian, to the first half of the tenth century. It was a time marked by the continued prominence of Chinese-based literature and culture and the gradual introduction of native vernacular and cultural forms, particularly the court-based vernacular literature written in *kana*, the native syllabary, which flourished from the tenth century onward. An example of the Chinese-based literature is the *Record of Miraculous Events in Japan* (*Nihon ryōiki*, ca. 822) by the priest Keikai, which was written in Chinese and gives both a Buddhist and a commoner's view of the world. Continuing this tradition was the most important writer in the early Heian period, Sugawara no Michizane (845–903), a statesman known for his writings in both Chinese poetry (*kanshi*) and Chinese prose (*kanbun*). Michizane, who rose to the pinnacle of power before abruptly falling, wrote on topics (student days, professional career, intellectual world, exile) that differed significantly from those found in the later kana writing by women.

The rise in popularity of kana in the late ninth century, particularly in the form of *waka*, thirty-one-syllable Japanese poems, gave birth to a variety of vernacular literature in the tenth century. Waka became integral to the everyday life of the aristocracy, functioning as a form of elevated dialogue and the primary means of communication between the sexes, who usually were physically segregated from each other. These poems also became an important part of public life, particularly at banquets where the composition of poetry in Japanese or Chinese was required. They often were collected, in either large anthologies, like the *Man'yōshū* and the *Kokinshū*, or smaller private collections of the works of a single poet. The first imperial waka anthology, the *Kokinshū*, established

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the model for Japanese poetry and became the foundation (in both diction and thematic content) for subsequent court literature.

The private waka collections, which included exchanges between the poet and his or her acquaintances, also led to a variety of new genres: (1) poetic travel diaries, such as the *Tosa Diary* by Ki no Tsurayuki; (2) confessional, semiautobiographical poetic diaries by women, like the *Kagerō Diary* by Mother of Michitsuna and the *Sarashina Diary* by Daughter of Takasue; and (3) poem tales (*uta-monogatari*) centering on the poetry of a particular poet, of which the most famous example is *The Tales of Ise*, initially based on the poetry of Ariwara no Narihira (825–880), the implicit protagonist. In short, the early tenth century marked the beginning of both vernacular poetry and vernacular fiction, the latter represented by *The Tale of the Bamboo Cutter* (*Taketori monogatari*, ca. 909) and *The Tales of Ise* (*Ise monogatari*, ca. 947). Not accidentally, the Engi era (901–923) was also the time when the native leaders of poetry in Chinese and of Chinese studies (*kangaku*)—such as Sugawara no Michizane and Ki no Haseo (845–912)—died, yielding the literary spotlight to Japanese poetry.

The second major period of Heian literature, from the latter half of the tenth century through the first half of the eleventh century, can be said to start with the *Kagerō Diary*, by Mother of Michitsuna, written in the 970s and marking the beginning of major prose writings by women. The peak of this period comes with the reign of Emperor Ichijō (986–1011), during which *The Pillow Book*, *The Tale of Genji*, and the *Diary of Izumi Shikibu* were written. Although there were important women writers in the ancient period such as Lady Nukata, Lady Sakanoue, and Lady Kasa, all poets represented in the *Man'yōshū*, they did not have the productivity and quality of those in the mid-Heian period.

THE RISE OF WOMEN'S WRITING

One of the striking characteristics of the emergence of Japanese vernacular literature was the central role played by women writers who were either at or closely associated with the imperial court in the late tenth and early eleventh centuries, such as Murasaki Shikibu, Sei Shōnagon, Mother of Michitsuna, Izumi Shikibu, and Daughter of Takasue. One reason for the prominent role of aristocratic women at this time is the writing system. Kana, the vernacular syllabary, became prominent in the early tenth century, enabling the Japanese to write more easily in their own language. Until then, writing had been in Chinese (as in the *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki*) or had used Chinese characters to transcribe the native Japanese language (as in the *Man'yōshū*). Despite the emergence of a native syllabary, the male nobility continued to write in Chinese, which remained the more prestigious language and the language of government, scholarship, and religion. By contrast, aristocratic women, who were generally relegated to a nonpublic sphere, adopted the native syllabary as their

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first language and used it to write diaries, memoirs, poetry, and fiction. One consequence was that women's writing had an internal, psychological dimension that was rarely found even in men's kana writing, which, in any case, remained secondary to their work in Chinese.

The second reason for the development of women's writing was the political, social, and cultural importance of the ladies-in-waiting at the imperial court. The leading Fujiwara families poured their resources into the residences, cultural activities, and entourages of their daughters, who competed for the attention of the emperor. Indeed, the ladies-in-waiting to these Fujiwara daughters wrote much of the vernacular literature of the mid-Heian period. They were the daughters of provincial governors, the mid-level aristocrats, who were frequently in unstable political and economic positions. Having failed to rise in the court hierarchy, many of these provincial governors went to the provinces to make a living and so had an outsider's perspective on court life. One consequence was that the literature written by women at court paid homage to the powerful Fujiwara patrons (as in *The Pillow Book* and *Murasaki Shikibu's Diary*) while also expressing deep disillusionment with court life (as in the *Sarashina Diary*) and with the marital customs that supported this sociopolitical system (as in the *Kagerō Diary*). Part of the complexity of *The Tale of Genji*, in fact, comes from this conflicting view of court culture and power.

The thirty-one-syllable classical poem (waka) emerged as the most important vernacular (kana) genre. Occasions and topics for these poems ranged from the seasons to love to miscellaneous topics such as celebration, mourning, separation, and travel, which form separate chapters in the *Kokinshū*. Poems were composed for public functions, at poetry contests (*uta-awase*) and poetry parties, and for illustrated screens (*byōbu uta*), which were commissioned by the royalty and the powerful Fujiwara families. Waka functioned privately as a social medium for greetings, courtship, and farewell, as well as a means of self-reflection. Poets also edited private collections, of either their own poetry or that of a poet like Ariwara no Narihira or Ono no Komachi. These private poetry collections could take the form of a travel diary, as in the *Tosa Diary*, one of the first diaries written in kana. Private poetry collections could also lead to confessional autobiographies like the *Kagerō Diary*, which probably began as a private collection of poems by Mother of Michitsuna. Private collections of poetry also gave rise to the poem tale, which contained anecdotes about poems that were compiled to create a biographical narrative like *The Tales of Ise*, itself based on the poems and legends surrounding Ariwara no Narihira.

In Murasaki Shikibu's day, as in previous centuries, men wrote prose in Chinese, the official language of religion and government. In the tenth century, therefore, vernacular prose, particularly literary diaries, belonged to women to the extent that, in the *Tosa Diary*, the leading male poet of the day, Ki no Tsurayuki, assumes the persona of a woman in writing a literary diary in Japanese. Male scholars, however, were the first to write vernacular tales, or

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monogatari, although they did so anonymously, for such writing was considered a lowly activity directed only at women and children. These early vernacular tales, which began with *The Tale of the Bamboo Cutter* (ca. 909), tend to be highly romantic, fantastical, and dominated by folkloric elements. Women, by contrast, tended to write highly personal, confessional literature based on their private lives and centered on their own poetry. The author of the *Kagerō Diary*, the first major literary diary by a woman, wrote out of a profound dissatisfaction with contemporary monogatari, which, in her view, were "just so much fantasy." Murasaki Shikibu was able to combine both traditions. *The Tale of Genji* carries on the earlier monogatari tradition in its larger plot and in its amorous hero, who echoes the earlier Narihira in *The Tales of Ise*. But in its style, details, psychological insight, and portrayal of the dilemmas faced by women in aristocratic society, *The Tale of Genji* remains firmly rooted in the women's writing tradition.

LATE HEIAN KANA HISTORIES AND ANECDOTAL LITERATURE

With the decline of the northern branch of the Fujiwara lineage and the Fujiwara regency in the late eleventh century, a new historical literature in kana emerged. The first major example is *A Tale of Flowering Fortunes* (*Eiga monogatari*, ca. 1092), a historical tale attributed to a woman, which looks back at Fujiwara no Michinaga (966–1027), who brought the Fujiwara regency to its peak. *A Tale of Flowering Fortunes* was quickly followed by the "mirror pieces" (*kagami mono*), a series of historical chronicles written in Japanese, beginning with *The Great Mirror* (*Ōkagami*, late eleventh century), which also recounts Michinaga's achievements.

The late Heian period was also marked by the emergence of anecdote (*setsuwa*) collections, the first of which was the massive *Collection of Tales of Times Now Past* (*Konjaku monogatari shū*, ca. 1120), that reflect the heavy influence of Pure Land Buddhism, incorporate stories of rebirth in the Pure Land, and depict the life of commoners in the provinces. *Tales of Times Now Past*, which continues the tradition of the *Nihon ryōiki*, looks forward to the many setsuwa collections of the medieval period and reveals the widening social and religious interest of the aristocracy and priesthood. In contrast to the *Nihon ryōiki*, which was written in Chinese, *Tales of Times Now Past* was written in a mixed style that merged kana with the *kanbun kundoku* (a Japanese style of reading Chinese prose) style. This new *wakan* (Japanese–Chinese) mixed style, with its rhythmical base, eventually produced military narratives (*gunki-mono*) like *The Tales of the Heike*, which became a hallmark of early medieval literature. Another product of the late Heian period was the *Treasured Selections of Superb Songs* (*Ryōjin hishō*, ca. 1179), a collection of folk songs (*kayō*), which might be considered the poetic equivalent of *Tales of Times Now Past* in reflecting Pure Land Buddhism and commoner life.

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LATE HEIAN WAKA AND MONOGATARI

Court literature based on waka and the monogatari continued to flourish among the aristocracy and royalty. Six *chokusenshū*, or imperial waka collections, authorized by various emperors, were compiled between the *Kokinshū*, in the early tenth century, and the *Shinkokinshū*, in the early thirteenth century. The most important of these in the late Heian period was the *Senzaishū*, compiled in 1187 by Fujiwara no Shunzei, a prominent judge at poetry contests and one of the most influential proponents of waka in the late Heian period. The monogatari, or vernacular prose fiction depicting aristocratic life, continued to be written in significant numbers. They are represented in this anthology by *The Tale of Sagoromo* (*Sagoromo monogatari*, ca. 1060s) and *The Stories of the Riverside Middle Counselor* (*Tsutsumi chūnagon monogatari*, 1055), both of which were heavily influenced by *The Tale of Genji*. Some of these later monogatari can in fact be seen as allusive variations on *The Tale of Genji*, in much the same way that the poetry of the *Shinkokinshū* often depended on allusive variations on the earlier poetry of the *Kokinshū*.

KEIKAI

Keikai (otherwise known as Kyōkai, late eighth–early ninth century), the compiler of the *Record of Miraculous Events in Japan* (*Nihon ryōiki*), was a *shidosō*, or private priest, as opposed to a publicly recognized and certified priest ordained by the ritsuryō state. (The ritsuryō state attempted to keep a tight control on the priesthood and cracked down on private priests, who took vows without official permission, often as a way to avoid taxation and service.) Keikai's own accounts of himself in the *Nihon ryōiki* state that in 787 he realized that his current poverty and secular life were the result of evil deeds in a previous life and so he decided to become a priest. Keikai was probably born in the latter half of the Nara period, around 757 to 764, and lived into the early Heian period.

RECORD OF MIRACULOUS EVENTS IN JAPAN (*NIHON RYŌIKI*, CA. 822)

During Keikai's time, during the reigns of Emperor Kanmu and his son Emperor Saga (r. 809–823), the country was rocked by considerable social disorder, famine, and plagues. It was a particularly hard time for the farmers, many of whom fled from their home villages. Some of these refugees were absorbed into local temples and private estates, and others became private priests. Unlike the official priests in the capital who had aristocratic origins, these private priests attracted a more plebian constituency, and for them the *Record of Miraculous Events in Japan* functioned as a kind of handbook of sermons. In this regard, the *Nihon ryōiki* differs significantly from

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the elite literature being produced at this time, such as *Kaifūsō* (751) and *Bunka shūreishū* (818), two noted collections of Chinese poetry and refined Chinese prose written by aristocrats. Instead, the *Nihon ryōiki* is written in a rough unorthodox style of Chinese-style prose that depicts the underside of society and the reality of everyday commoner life.

The *Nihon ryōiki*, often considered to be Japan's first *setsuwa* (anecdote or folk story) collection, bears the signs of earlier oral storytelling. Although 80 percent of the stories take place in the Yamato area, the place-names come from almost every part of the country, from Michinoku (northeast Honshū) to Higo (in Kyushu), strongly suggesting that the private priest would preach at a certain village, gather stories, and then use them at another village, as a storyteller would. In the process, local folk stories and anecdotes became Buddhist parables. Whereas the *Nihon shoki* and *Kojiki* combined many of the local and provincial myths and legends into a larger state mythology, Buddhism similarly began to absorb local folk stories, converting them to its own use and producing the kinds of Buddhist anecdotes found in the *Nihon ryōiki*. As a consequence, the interest of a number of the stories in the *Nihon ryōiki* is not in the Buddhistic message, which is usually found at the end, but in the story itself, which often was erotic or violent.

As he notes in the introduction, Keikai arranged these stories in such a way as to demonstrate the Buddhist principle of karmic causality, in which the rewards and retribution for past actions are directly manifested in this world. This principle is embodied in the full title, *Record of Miraculous Cases of Manifest Rewards and Retribution for Good and Evil in Japan* (*Nihonkoku genpō zen'aku ryōi-ki*). The stories generally are one of two types: those in which good deeds are rewarded and those in which evil deeds are punished. Other stories demonstrate the miraculous powers of Buddha, the bodhisattvas, sutras, and Buddhist icons. Conversely, the *Kojiki*, *Nihon shoki*, and various fudoki are filled with gods of nature and agriculture, who were worshiped as clan or communal deities. In the eighth century, as people gained more control over the land and agriculture, they relied less on or had less fear of these nature-agricultural deities. And as Buddhism became more influential, these native gods were often displaced or replaced by Buddhist gods. Folk stories and myths of agricultural origin were likewise given Buddhist interpretations. For example, in the *Nihon ryōiki*, stories about marriage between humans and nonhumans (such as the early chronicle myths of Mount Miwa and Luck of the Mountain), which originally were stories about the origins of communal or clan ancestors, were transformed into negative examples, with, for example, the snake turning into an evil force or representing evil deeds from an earlier life.

In the *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki*, the underworld (Yomi) is a place marked by pollution where bodies decompose. By contrast, in the *Nihon ryōiki*, we suddenly are confronted with a terrifying Buddhist hell where past actions are severely punished. In the ancient period, sin was often the result of transgressing the communal order, usually agricultural violations or pollutions, but in the *Nihon ryōiki*, sin takes on new meaning as a moral and social violation, with the individual responsible for his or her

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own actions. In the early chronicles, disease was something cured by communal means, by purification and cleansing, but later, disease, which figures prominently in the *Nihon ryōiki*, became the punishment for sin, the result of previous karma.

The *Nihon ryōiki* contains 116 stories and is divided into three volumes, which appear to be arranged in chronological order. The effort to present the history of Buddhism is clear, with the climax or apex coming in the Tenpyō era (729–749), with the reign of Emperor Shōmu (r. 724–749), who built the statue of the Great Buddha in the Tōdai-ji temple in Nara and took holy vows. Prince Shōtoku, Emperor Shōmu, and Priest Gyōki (668–749)—all from the Tenpyō era—figure prominently in the second volume, which represents Buddhism at its apex. Gyōki, who traveled through the countryside teaching Buddhism to commoners in easily understood terms, is perhaps the single most important figure in the *Nihon ryōiki* and reflects Keikai's own position as a private priest. In the story about the crab (2:12), for example, which occurs during Shōmu's reign, Gyōki appears and advises the woman to have faith in the Three Treasures (the Buddha, the Buddhist law, and the Buddhist priesthood).

The third and last volume, by contrast, is strongly pervaded by a notion of *mappō* (the last days of the Buddhist law), which is the last of the three ages of the Buddhist law, an age of decline in which Buddhist teachings were abandoned. As the introduction to the *Nihon ryōiki* contends, Keikai was convinced that the world was in a state of serious decline, if not apocalyptic collapse, and that the sermons based on the *Nihon ryōiki* were necessary to save people from their great sins. In contrast to the later monogatari, which admit to being fiction, the *Nihon ryōiki*, like other setsuwa, insists on the truth of the stories told. That is, to teach the truth of the Buddha, the stories had to be miraculous, but they also had to be presented as truthful.

Introduction

When I, Keikai, a monk at the Yakushi-ji temple in Nara, look closely at human society, I see that everywhere people are enamored of base acts. Some have a greed and eagerness for profit that is mightier than the magnet that pulls iron out of the mountain. They covet what others have and yet hang on to everything that is their own with a tightfistedness greater than that of the miller who squeezed even a chestnut shell to get something out of it. Some cheat Buddhist temples; they will be reborn as calves to work off their great debt. Some slander Buddhist monks; they will meet with disaster while still in their current lives. Others, however, follow the Buddhist path and discipline themselves; they already have been rewarded in this life. Others have deep faith, practice what is good, and enjoy happiness here and now. Good or evil deeds make their own reward or retribution in the way that a shape in the sunlight makes its own shadow. Pain and pleasure are produced by such actions in the same way that a sound in the valley produces its own echo. Those who see and hear such things immediately think of them as marvels but forget that they are real events in our own world. The person with a reason to be ashamed finds that his heart

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is pounding wildly and looks for some way to make a hasty exit. If we did not have such illustrations of what is good and what is evil, what could we use to straighten out those whose lives are crooked, and how could we differentiate the evil from the good? And without these examples of the workings of the law of karma, with what could we rectify the evil-minded and pursue the path of the good?

Long ago in China *The Record of Invisible Karma* (*Mingbao ji*) was written, and in the great Tang dynasty *The Record of Wonders Connected with the Vajra-Prajnaparamita Sutra* (*Boruo yanyi*) was composed.[1] Why is it that we stand in awe before records compiled in other countries but do not believe in and marvel at the strange things that happen on our own soil? With my own eyes having seen such things happen right here, I cannot be indolent and indifferent. I have spent a good deal of time sitting and thinking about this, but now it is time for me to break my silence. Therefore, I have compiled here the rather limited number of such stories that have reached my ears; I have entitled my work *The Record of Miraculous Cases of Manifest Rewards and Retribution for Good and Evil in Japan.*

On a Boy of Great Physical Strength Whose Birth Was Given by the Thunder's Blessing (1:3)

This story probably originally was a legend from Owari Province that the Gangō-ji Temple adapted and turned into a Buddhist story. It has a number of folktale elements—a small child who has great strength, a rock-throwing contest, the exorcism of a demon, a demon that turns out to be the vengeful spirit of a dead person, a water contest—that appear in other legends.

During the reign of Emperor Bidatsu, who resided at the palace of Osada in Iware,[2] there was a farmer in the village of Katawa in the Ayuchi District of Owari Province.[3] While he was irrigating the rice fields, it began to rain. The farmer took shelter under a tree and stood there holding a metal rod in his hands. When it thundered, he raised the rod in fear. At that moment the thunder struck in front of him in the form of a child, who bowed deeply. The farmer was about to strike it with the metal rod when the child said, "Please don't hit me. I will repay your kindness." The farmer asked, "What will you do for me, then?" The thunder answered, "I will send you a baby to repay your kindness.

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1. *The Record of Invisible Karma* (*Mingbao ji*) is a text in three books composed by Gaozong around 650. *The Record of Wonders Connected with the Vajra-Prajnaparamita Sutra* (*Boruo yanyi*) is another text in three books composed in 718 by Meng Xianzhong.

2. The palace of Emperor Bidatsu (r. 572–585) was located in the western part of present-day Sakurai City, in Nara Prefecture.

3. In present-day Nagoya City.

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Make a boat of camphor wood, fill it with water, and give it to me with a bamboo leaf on the water."[4]

After the farmer did this, the thunder said, "Keep away from me," and it ascended to heaven in a rising mist.

Some time later a baby was born to the farmer; the baby had a snake coiled twice around his head, and the snake's head and tail hung down his back. When the child reached his teens, he heard about a man of great strength at the court, and he went to the capital with the thought of challenging the man in a contest of strength. An unusually strong prince lived in a detached house on the northeast corner of the imperial palace grounds, where a stone eight feet square also stood. At one time, the powerful prince came out, picked up the huge stone, and threw it. Then he went back into his house and closed the door to prevent people from entering. The boy saw this, and he knew that the prince was the very man he sought.

That night the boy crept into the place and threw the stone one foot farther than the prince had done. When the mighty prince discovered this, he clapped his hands to warm up, and tried to throw it farther but failed. A second time the boy threw it two feet farther, and again the prince failed. Then making footprints three inches deep, the boy threw it yet three feet farther. The prince wanted to catch the boy, who was easily identified by his small footprints, but the boy ran away quickly. The prince then tried to catch the boy as he was creeping out through the hedge, but he found that the boy was inside the hedge. When the prince jumped over the hedge to reach the boy, the boy was already on the other side, and the mighty prince was unable to catch him. The prince, realizing that the boy was indeed stronger, gave up chasing him.

Sometime later the boy became an acolyte[5] at the Gangō-ji Temple.[6] At that time, every night some of the acolytes in service at the bell hall were murdered. The new acolyte offered to the monks at the temple, "I will put an end to these tragedies by killing the evil fiend,"[7] and the monks accepted his proposal. The boy set four lamps and four men at the four corners of the bell hall and said to them, "When I get hold of the fiend, take the covers off the lamps." Then he hid at the base of the door.

At midnight the huge fiend appeared but departed at the sight of the boy, returning again before dawn. The boy seized it by the hair and pulled hard. The fiend struggled to extricate itself, but the acolyte pulled it into the hall. Frightened, the four men at the four corners were unable to remove the lamp covers so the boy had to light the lamps, one by one, while dragging the fiend

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4. Camphor wood was used to make boats.

5. An unordained boy under the age of twenty working at the temple as an apprentice.

6. Originally called Asuka-dera or Hōko-ji, founded by Soga no Umako in 588 and completed in 596. It was moved to the Nara capital in 716.

7. *Oni* (hungry ghost), one of the six modes of existence in the Buddhist cosmology.

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around the hall. Around dawn, the fiend, its hair having been torn out completely, escaped. In the morning, people traced the bloodstains as far as the crossroads, where a wicked former slave of the temple was buried,[8] and they discovered that it was the ghost of that dead man. The hair is still preserved in the Gangō-ji as a treasure.[9]

Meanwhile the acolyte became a lay brother and continued to live at the Gangō-ji. The temple owned some irrigated rice fields. When some princes stopped the water flowing in to them and the fields dried out, the lay brother proposed, "I will irrigate the fields." The monks agreed to this plan. First, the lay brother made a plow so heavy that it took ten men to carry it. He picked up the plow in his hand like a cane and went to the fields, where he placed it at the sluice gate to prop it open. But the princes took it away and closed the sluice gate that controlled the irrigation of the temple's fields. At this point the lay brother placed at the sluice a stone so heavy that it would have required more than a hundred men to move it, and he went to work in the fields. The princes, terrified by his great strength, did not dare to cause any more trouble. After that, the fields were never dry, and they yielded good crops. The monks of the temple allowed the lay brother to be ordained and to renounce the world, naming him Dharma Master Dōjō.

This is the story of the mighty hero of the Gangō-ji, renowned in later legends, whose extraordinary strength originated in the merits accumulated in his former lives. This miraculous event was witnessed in Japan.

On the Death Penalty in This Life for an Evil Son Who Tried to Kill His Mother out of Love for His Wife (2:3)

Killing a parent was one of the eight crimes under ritsuryō codes. In Buddhism it was considered one of the five heinous sins, for which one would go to hell. Similar stories appear in the *Collection of Tales of Times Now Past* (20:33) and in volume 7 of the *Collection of Treasures of the Buddhist Law* (*Hōbutsushū*).

Kishi no Ōmaro came from the village of Kamo, Tama District, Musashi Province.[10] Ōmaro's mother was Kusakabe no Matoji.[11] During the reign of Emperor

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8. The belief that the spirits of the dead, particularly of those who died violently, would linger in this world and cause harm to the living. In order to prevent the evil spirits from acting, wicked people were buried at a crossroads or at the end of a bridge in the hope that the pressure of heavy traffic would keep them in their graves.

9. This passage reflects a belief that anything extraordinary or strange had power and thus should be properly cared for.

10. Tama is in present-day Tokyo.

11. Kusakabe is a family name, and Matoji is a given name.

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Shōmu, Ōmaro was appointed a frontier soldier[12] at Tsukushi by Ōtomo[13] (name unknown) and had to spend three years there. His mother accompanied him and lived with him while his wife stayed behind to take care of the house.

Out of love for his wife who had been left behind, Ōmaro came up with the wicked idea of killing his mother and returning home to his wife, claiming exemption from duty on the pretext of mourning.[14] Because his mother's mind was set on doing good, he said to her, "In the eastern mountain, there will be a great meeting for a week of lectures on the Lotus Sutra. Would you like to go to hear them?"

His mother, deceived, was eager to go, and, devoutly purifying herself in a hot bath, accompanied her son to the mountain. Then he looked at her fiercely, as though with the eyes of a bull, and commanded, "You, kneel down on the ground!" Gazing at his face, she said, "Why are you talking like that? Have you been possessed by a fiend?" But her son drew a sword to kill her. Kneeling down in front of her son, she said to him, "We plant a tree in order to get its fruit and to take shelter in its shade.[15] We bring up children in order to get their help and to depend on them. What on earth has driven you so crazy? I feel as though the tree I have been depending on has suddenly ceased to protect me from the rain." But he would not listen to her, so she sorrowfully took off her clothes, put them in three piles, knelt down, and told him her last wish: "Will you wrap up these clothes for me? One pile goes to you, my eldest son, one to my second son, and one to my third son."

When the wicked son stepped forward to cut off his mother's head, the earth opened up to swallow him. At that moment his mother grabbed her falling son by the hair and appealed to heaven, wailing, "My child has been possessed by a spirit and has been driven to commit such an evil deed. He is out of his mind. I beg you to forgive his sin." Despite all her efforts to pull him up by the hair, he fell. The merciful mother brought his hair back home to hold funeral rites and put it in a box in front of an image of Buddha and asked monks to chant scriptures.

How great was the mother's compassion! So great that she loved an evil son and did good on his behalf. Indeed, we know that an unfilial sin is punished immediately and that an evil deed never avoids a penalty.

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12. *Sakimori*, or soldiers sent to Tsukushi (Kyushu) to defend the country from a possible invasion by foreign troops from Korea or China. Their tour of duty was three years, and they were not allowed to bring any family members.

13. The Ōtomo clan was traditionally in charge of military matters and served the emperors as imperial guards.

14. The mourning period for parents was one year, during which people were exempted from any labor duties.

15. From the *Daihatsu nehan-gyō*, vol. 21, one of the central texts of the Buddhist canon.

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On the Immediate Reward of Being Saved by Crabs for Saving the Lives of Crabs and a Frog (2:12)

A similar story appears in the *Record of Miraculous Powers of the Lotus Sutra in Japan* (*Honchō hokke genki*), but without Gyōki's name, at a different place (Kuse), and ending with a reference to the Kanimata-dera (Crab Temple), indicating that it was an *engi*, or story, about the origins of a temple. A similar story also is found in the *Collection of Tales of Times Now Past* (16:16) and the *Collection of Things Written and Heard in Past and Present* (*Kokon chomonjū*) (20:682).

In Kii District, Yamashiro Province,[16] there lived a woman whose name is unknown. She was born with a compassionate heart and believed in the law of karmic causation, so she never took a life, observing the five precepts[17] and the ten virtues.[18]

During the reign of Emperor Shōmu, some young cowherders in her village caught eight crabs in a mountain brook and were about to roast and eat them. She saw this and begged them, "Will you please be good enough to give them to me?" They would not listen to her, insisting, "We will roast and eat them." Repeating her earnest request, she removed her robe to pay for the crabs. Eventually they gave them to her. She invited a Buddhist master to give a blessing and released them.

Later, she was in the mountain and saw a large snake swallowing a big toad. She implored the large snake, "Please set this frog free for my sake, and I will give you many offerings." The snake did not respond. Then she collected more offerings and prayed, "I will consecrate you as a god. Please give the frog to me." Without answering, the snake continued to swallow the toad. Again she pleaded, "I will become your wife in exchange for this toad. I beg you to release it to me." Raising its head high, the snake listened, staring at her, and disgorged the toad. The woman made a promise to the snake, saying, "Come to me in seven days."

She told her parents in detail about the whole episode. They despaired, asking, "Why on earth did you, our only child, make a promise you cannot fulfill?"

At that time the most venerable Gyōki was staying at Fukaosa Temple in Kii District. She went and told him what had happened. When he heard her story, he said, "What an incredible story! Just keep believing in the Three Treasures."[19]

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16. Present-day Kyoto area.

17. Not to steal, not to kill, not to commit adultery, not to lie, and not to drink alcohol.

18. Not to kill, not to steal, not to commit adultery, not to lie, not to use immoral language, not to slander, not to equivocate, not to covet, not to give way to anger, and not to hold false views.

19. Buddha, Buddhist law, and Buddhist priests.

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With these instructions she went home, and on the evening of the appointed day, she closed up the house, prepared herself for the ordeal, and made various vows with renewed faith in the Three Treasures. The snake came, crawled around and around the house, knocked on the walls with its tail, climbed onto the top of the roof, tore a hole in the thatch of the roof with its fangs, and dropped in front of her. She heard only the noise of scuffling, jumping, and biting. The next morning she found that the eight crabs had assembled and had cut the snake into shreds. She then learned that the released crabs had come to repay her kindness to them.

Even an insect that has no means of attaining enlightenment returns a favor. How can a man ever forget a kindness he has received? From this time on, people in Yamashiro Province have honored big crabs in the mountain streams and, if they are caught, set them free in order to do good.

On Receiving the Immediate Penalty of Violent Death for Collecting Debts by Force and with High Interest (3:26)

Several stories in the *Nihon ryōiki* (for example, 1:10) are about people stealing from others and, after dying, turning into a cow to be used for labor. This story differs in that the sinner becomes a cow in this life.

Mahito Hiromushime of the Tanaka lineage was the wife of Agatanushi Miyate of the Oya lineage, who was of the junior sixth rank, upper grade, and a governor of Miki District, Sanuki Province.[20] She gave birth to eight children and was very rich. Among her possessions were cattle, slaves, money and rice,[21] and fields. But she lacked faith and was so greedy that she would never give anything away. She used to make a great profit by selling rice wine diluted with water. On the day when she made loans, she used a small measuring cup, whereas on the day she collected, she used a big measuring cup. When she lent rice, she used a lightweight scale, but when she collected it, she used a heavyweight scale. She showed no mercy in forcibly collecting interest, which was sometimes ten times and sometimes a hundred times as much as the original loan. She was strict in collecting debts, never being generous. Because of this, many people worried a great deal and abandoned their homes to escape from her, going to other provinces. Never was there anyone so greedy.

On the first of the Sixth Month in 776, Hiromushime took to her bed and stayed there for many days. On the twentieth of the Seventh Month she called her husband and eight sons to her bedside and told them about the dream she had had.

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20. In present-day Kagawa Prefecture.

21. Lent with interest.

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"I was summoned to King Yama's palace[22] and was told of my three sins. The first one was using too much of the property of the Three Treasures and not repaying it; the second was making great profits by selling diluted rice wine; and the third was using two kinds of measuring cups and scales, giving only seven-tenths for a loan but collecting twelve-tenths for a debt. 'I summoned you because of these sins. I just want to show you that you should receive a penalty in this life,' he said."

The woman died on the same day that she related the dream. For seven days, her husband and sons did not have her cremated but called thirty-two monks and lay brothers to pray to Buddha for her for nine days. On the evening of the seventh day the woman was restored to life and opened the lid of the coffin. When they came to look at her, the stench was indescribable. Above the waist her body had turned into an ox with four-inch horns on her forehead, and her two hands had become hooves, with the nails cracked like the insteps of an ox hoof. Below the waist her body had a human form. The woman did not like rice but preferred grass and, after eating, ruminated. She did not wear any clothes but lay in her filth. Streams of people from the east and west hurried to gather and look at her in wonder. In shame, grief, and pity, her husband and children prostrated themselves on the ground, making numerous vows. In order to atone for her sins, they offered various treasures to the Miki-dera Temple, and seventy oxen, thirty horses, fifty acres of fields, and four thousand rice bundles to the Tōdai-ji. They wrote off all debts. At the end of five days, after the provincial and district magistrates had seen her and were about to send a report to the central government, she died. All the witnesses in that district and province grieved and worried about her.

Being unreasonable and unrighteous, the woman did not know the law of karmic retribution, but we know that this was an immediate penalty for unreasonable deeds and unrighteous deeds. Since the immediate penalty comes as surely as this, how much more certain will be the penalty in a future life.[23]

One scripture says: "Those who don't repay their debts will atone for them, by being reborn as a horse or an ox."[24] The debtor is compared with a slave, the creditor with a master. The former is like a pheasant, the latter a hawk. If you make a loan, don't use excessive force to collect the debt, for if you are unreasonable, you will be reborn as a horse or an ox and made to work by your debtor.

[Adapted from a translation by Kyoko Nakamura]

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22. The king of hell (Yama).

23. The narrator is distinguishing between karmic retribution in this life and karmic retribution in the next life. The results of both good and evil deeds are manifested in either of these two ways.

24. A summary of a passage from the *Jōjitsu-ron*, a Buddhist treatise.

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ONO NO KOMACHI

Little is known about the life of Ono no Komachi (fl. ca. 850), one of the most prominent early female waka poets, but her poetry and stories about her life have attracted popular and scholarly attention for centuries. The poems most reliably attributed to her are the eighteen attributed to her in the early-tenth-century *Kokinshū*, the first and most prestigious of the imperial waka anthologies. Komachi is praised in the *Kokinshū* by its chief compiler, Ki no Tsurayuki, as one of the six outstanding poets of "recent times" (who are known collectively as the Rokkasen, or Six Poetic Immortals).[25] She also is included in another grouping of notable poets, the Sanjūrokkasen, or Thirty-six Poetic Immortals, identified by the influential critic Fujiwara no Kintō (966–1041) as the greatest poets of the ancient and early Heian periods. In his *Kana* Preface to the *Kokinshū*, Tsurayuki comments, "Ono no Komachi is of the same lineage of Princess Sotoori of old. [Her poetry] is moving but not strong, resembling a beautiful woman afflicted by illness."[26] Tsurayuki was probably comparing the style of Komachi's poetry with that of Princess Sotoori, two of whose poems appear in the *Nihon shoki*.[27] Princess Sotoori's best-known characteristic—although she later was canonized as a deity of waka—was her radiant beauty. Subsequent interpretations of Tsurayuki's comments as referring to the physical appearance rather than the poetic skill of Komachi and Princess Sotoori became the basis of the legends about Komachi.

These legends foreground Komachi's amorousness, beauty, and fickleness, and their origins can be found in these comments by Tsurayuki and in Komachi's poems—for example, no. 554, in which the poet is overwhelmed by longing; no. 113, in which she laments the fading of her beauty; and no. 623, in which she rejects a persistent suitor. The nō play *Stupa Komachi* (*Sotoba Komachi*), translated later in this anthology, is one of the best-known dramatic treatments of Komachi and the medieval legends about her. In addition to her appearance as a character in nō plays and medieval prose narratives, interest in Komachi is evident in the compilation of the *Komachi Poetry Collection* (*Komachishū*) by unknown editors. Most of the 117 poems in the longest version of this collection are apocryphal, but their attribution to her reveals the ongoing fascination with Komachi legends. The poems most reliably attributed to Komachi, however, are those found in the *Kokinshū*, among which are those translated here.

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25. The other five poets thus praised by Tsurayuki in the *Kana* Preface to the *Kokinshū* are Ariwara no Narihira, Bishop Henjō, Monk Kisen, Fun'ya no Yasuhide, and Ōtomo no Kuronushi. "Recent times" here refers to the mid- to late ninth century, a few decades before the *Kokinshū* was compiled.

26. Based on the text in *Kokinwakashū*, SNKBT 5.

27. One of Princess Sotoori's *Nihon shoki* poems also appears in the *Kokinshū* (no. 110).

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SELECTED POEMS

The poems by Komachi in the *Kokinshū* are mostly love poems, reflecting the prevailing trend in Heian and later classical poetry toward the depiction of dissatisfaction and discord in love. All the love poems in the *Kokinshū* are arranged in narrative order, describing the progress of love from beginning to end, and Komachi's poems are given here in the order in which they appear in the *Kokinshū*. Dreams are a major image in classical love poetry and feature prominently in Komachi's works. She describes the world of dreams as an alternative—often preferable—reality in which the social restrictions of the waking world might be overcome. Yet even this dream world is not a perfect escape from the constraints of waking life, and Komachi's dream poems, set within the larger narrative arc of the *Kokinshū* love poems, reveal a gradual disillusionment with dreams as a venue for love. Indeed, the dream imagery in Komachi's poetry can be seen as one manifestation of her larger concern with the tenuous boundaries between illusion and reality, as seen, for instance, in no. 797, which questions the misleading nature of appearances. Both the perception of appearances as deceptive—in a world that is itself barely distinguishable from dreams—and concern with the passage of time are ultimately rooted in Buddhist teachings on the illusoriness of the phenomenal world. The concept of impermanence informs the preeminent Heian aesthetic ideal, seen in the *Kokinshū* and elsewhere, of *mono no aware*, often translated as "the pathos of things," according to which beauty is enhanced by its very ephemerality.

Komachi's poetry is noted for its rhetorical complexity and makes extensive use of pivot words (*kakekotoba*), a kind of pun characteristic of *Kokinshū* poetry. This technique allows the poet to compress multiple layers of meaning within the brief bounds of the waka form. Komachi's poems also frequently feature word associations (*engo*), images conventionally linked in classical waka; that is, one such image suggests others associated with it, evoking resonances in the reader's mind and, as with pivot words, intensifying the meaning without exceeding the prescribed length of the poem.

Spring 2

113

hana no iro wa	The color of the flowers
utsuri ni keri na	has faded—in vain
itazura ni	I grow old in this world,
waga mi yo ni furu	lost in thought
nagame seshi ma ni	as the long rain falls.[28]

28. This is one of Komachi's best-known poems and is included in Fujiwara no Teika's exemplary collection *One Hundred Poets, One Hundred Poems* (*Hyakunin isshu*). "The color of

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Love 2

552

omoitsutsu	Longing for him
nureba ya hito no	I fell asleep—
mietsuramu	is that why he appeared?
yume to shiriseba	Had I known it was a dream
samezaramashi o	I would never have awakened.[29]

553

utatane ni	Since seeing in my sleep
koishiki hito o	the one whom I love,
miteshi yori	it's these things
yume chō mono o	called dreams
tanomi someteki	I've learned to trust.[30]

554

ito semete	In desperation,
koishiki toki wa	pressed hard by longing,
mubatama no	this berry-black night
yoru no koromo o	I wear my robes
kaeshite zo kiru	turned inside out.[31]

Love 3

623

mirume naki	Is it because
waga mi o ura to	he does not know

---

the flowers" is usually taken to refer also to the poet's physical beauty. *Furu* is a pivot word meaning both "[rain] falls" and "[time] passes," and *nagame* is another pivot word meaning "long rains" and "to gaze while deep in thought."

29. This is the first poem of the second book of love poetry in the *Kokinshū* and the first of a sequence of three dream poems (nos. 552–554) by Komachi. It starts with a rhetorical question: the poet's thoughts of her lover as she fell asleep caused him to appear in her dreams. The closeness of her dream to waking reality is evident in the poet's failure to realize she was dreaming. Her confusion calls into question the very distinction between the real and the illusory.

30. After further encounters with her lover, the poet not only recognizes that their meetings are taking place in her dreams but also identifies dreams as the superior venue for love. It is dreams, rather than the waking world, on which she has come to rely.

31. Dreams are again a motif in this poem, although they are not explicitly mentioned. It was popularly believed at the time that turning back one's sleeves would ensure that one dreamed of one's lover. Here the poet turns not just her sleeves but her entire robe inside out in her eagerness to meet her lover in her dreams. *Mubatama no* (berry-black) is an epithet (*makurakotoba*, or "pillow word") for words imaging night and blackness (here, for *yoru no koromo*, literally, "night robe"). The *mubatama* is the round, black fruit of the *hyōgi* plant.

Material com direitos autorais

shiraneba ya	there is no seaweed in this bay
karenade ama no	that the fisherman comes so often,
ashi tayuku kuru	his legs growing weary?[32]

656

utsutsu ni wa	In the waking world
sa mo koso arame	perhaps it must be so,
yume ni sae	but even in my dreams
hitome o moru to	to see him hide from others' eyes
miru ga wabishisa	is misery itself.[33]

657

kagiri naki	In boundless desire
omoi no mama ni	lit by the fire of love
yoru mo komu	this night at least
yumeji o sae ni	may you tread the path of dreams
hito wa togameji	and no one blame us.[34]

658

yumeji ni wa	On the path of dreams
ashi mo yasumezu	my feet never rest

---

32. This poem appears in the *Kokinshū* directly after a poem by Ariwara no Narihira: "Wetter even than the mornings I made my way home through the low bamboo—how soaked are my sleeves those nights I came but could not meet you." The juxtaposition of these poems in the *Kokinshū* became the basis of their adaptation in *The Tales of Ise* (sec. 25) as an exchange between the protagonist and "an amorous woman," thus linking two idealized exemplars of Heian courtly love: Narihira and Komachi. Komachi's poem begins with the word *mirume*, a pivot word meaning both "seaweed" and "a chance to meet," followed in the second phrase by *ura*, meaning both "bay" and "miserable." The literal meaning of *mirume naki ura* is thus "bay with no seaweed," and the parallel figurative meaning of *mirume naki waga mi o ura* is "I who am miserable and will not meet you." Komachi's unfortunate suitor is cast as a fisherman who does not seem to realize that his journeys will go unrewarded. *Ama* (fisherman), *ura* (bay), and *mirume* (seaweed) are associated words (*engo*).

33. This is the first of another sequence of dream poems by Komachi (*Kokinshū*, nos. 656–658) in the third book of love poetry. Whereas the earlier set of dream poems (nos. 552–554) presents dreams as an alternative world in which lovers have the opportunity to meet, these later poems show an increasing awareness of the limitations of that world, and the intrusion of less welcome aspects of the waking world. In this poem the poet's expectations are confounded: the dream world has become as restrictive as the real world. Even in dreams, the poet's lover must conceal their relationship from others.

34. The main image here is *yumeji* (the path of dreams), along which the poet's lover will, she hopes, travel to her, his way lit by the flame of her desire. The beliefs underlying dream imagery in classical love poetry held that the intensity of one's feelings for one's lover could induce him to appear in one's dream or could cause one to appear in his dreams. The (*h*)*i* of *omoi* (desire) is a pivot word with *hi* (fire), imaging the strength of the poet's feelings and a contrast with the dark of

Material com direitos autorais

kayoedomo	as I run to see you,
utsutsu ni hitome	though it's not worth a glimpse
mishigoto wa arazu	of your waking self.[35]

Love 5

797

iro miede	What fades away
utsurou mono wa	its color unseen
yo no naka no	is the flower
hito no kokoro no	of the heart
hana ni zo arikeru	of those of this world.[36]

Miscellaneous 2

938

When Fun'ya no Yasuhide became the third-ranked official of Mikawa Province and invited me to come sightseeing in the provinces, this was my reply:

wabinureba	Lonely and forlorn
mi o ukikusa no	as a drifting weed:
ne o taete	should flowing waters
sasou mizu araba	beckon
inamu to zo omou	I think I'd follow.[37]

[Translated by Anne Commons]

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night. Anxieties about the censure of society make their presence felt, however, with the poet's hoping that at least her lover's travels on the path of dreams will not be condemned by others. (The implication is that an encounter with her lover in waking life *would* invite blame.)

35. This poem reads almost as a response to the previous one. Although the poet is traveling frequently on the path of dreams, she also is becoming disillusioned with dreams as a substitute for the waking world. In *Kokinshū*, no. 553, it was dreams on which the poet had started to rely as a means of meeting her lover. Now, however, she realizes that the many dream encounters she has with him are not the equal of even a single glimpse of him in real life.

36. This poem appears in the fifth and final book of love in the *Kokinshū*, which contains eighty-two poems on the failures and deceptions of love. In this context, we may read the poem as a comment on the fickleness of one person's heart, a former lover who has lost interest in the poet, and on the unreliability of human feelings in the world at large, in which nothing is as it seems.

37. The headnote identifies this poem as a response to one by another prominent poet of the early Heian period, Fun'ya no Yasuhide, a contemporary of Komachi who also is identified in the *Kokinshū* as one of the Six Poetic Immortals. The *uki* of *ukigusa* is a pivot word meaning both "floating" (of the waterweed) and "miserable" (the poet). The poet compares her unhappy self (*mi*) to the floating weed: both are adrift at the mercy of their surroundings. The "flowing waters" represent the message from Yasuhide. The poet implies that like a weed drifting on the water, she would journey to the provinces in response to his invitation. This poem appears in a book of the *Kokinshū* that includes many poems about the uncertainties and disappointments of life in the mundane world.

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SUGAWARA NO MICHIZANE

The early Heian period was marked by the heavy influence of Chinese culture and Chinese literature, with Chinese the written language of the court and the emperors sponsoring imperial anthologies of the best examples of Chinese poetry by Japanese poets. Sugawara no Michizane's grandfather, who had visited China as a diplomat, established a family tradition of Sinological scholarship. Signs of change, however, began to appear in the middle of the ninth century with a revival of interest in waka and the emergence of the Fujiwara regency. The rise of the Fujiwara signaled the weakening of Sinified administrative institutions and the new enthusiasm for vernacular literature eventually led to a decline in enthusiasm for literature written in Chinese.

Writing in Chinese required mastery of both classical Chinese and the vast body of lore alluded to in Chinese literature. Having been born into a scholarly family, Sugawara no Michizane (845–903) received extensive training in Chinese, and his career resembled that of Chinese literati officials. After studying at the state university, he passed a civil service examination and held a series of posts until 877, when he was made a professor of literature, making him a dominant figure among court intellectuals. Nine years later, he was appointed governor of Sanuki (now Kagawa Prefecture) in Shikoku. Although he objected to his rustication, Michizane wrote some of his most interesting poetry in the province. Perhaps the novelty of the setting inspired a more imaginative approach to his art, or perhaps he simply had more time to write. After his return to the capital in 890, the new emperor promoted him to high office as a counterbalance to the Fujiwaras' power, arousing the enmity of Michizane's rivals, both political and academic. As a result, he was slandered and, in 901, exiled to Kyushu, where he died two years later, still protesting his innocence.

The following years were marked by the untimely deaths of some of Michizane's former rivals, most conspicuously in 930, when lightning struck the palace and killed four of them. Michizane was posthumously pardoned, promoted, and deified as Tenjin (Heavenly Deity). Shrines were built to worship Tenjin, the oldest being at the site of his grave in Kyushu and another, built in 947, at Kitano, just north of the capital. Although people originally had feared Tenjin's wrath, by 986 the court literati were presenting poems to Kitano Shrine and describing Tenjin as "the progenitor of literature, the lord of poetry." Reverence for Tenjin spread, and today, shrines dedicated to him are among the most numerous in Japan. They often were centers of literary activity, although in recent years Tenjin has come to be worshiped as a patron of all trying to pass university examinations.

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Formal robe (*sokutai*) for noblemen and emperor.

Michizane may have been deified to placate his angry ghost, but his poetry, particularly that written in Chinese, continues to find an audience for its literary qualities. Michizane excelled at composition in Chinese at a time when it was first beginning to lose its monopoly on literary and cultural prestige and to be eclipsed by waka. In contrast to the brevity of waka and its relatively narrow range of topics, Chinese poetry allowed more detailed exposition and favored some topics excluded from waka, as seen in the following examples.

Michizane's works in Chinese are preserved in two anthologies. The first is *Kanke bunsō*, roughly translated as *Literary Drafts of the Sugawara Family*. Michizane himself compiled and presented this anthology to the emperor in 900, along with the now-lost works of his father and grandfather. *Kanke bunsō* begins with six books of poetry arranged chronologically, followed by another six books of prose, subdivided by genre. Shortly before his death, Michizane sent the poems he had written in exile to a disciple in the capital, who compiled them into a second anthology, *Kanke kōshū* (*The Later Collection of the Sugawara Family*). Examples of Michizane's waka are preserved in several imperial anthologies. The following selections from Michizane's writings are grouped by topic, which have been arranged to leave some of the poems in their original chronological order. The headings to the individual poems were written by Michizane himself.

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STUDENT DAYS

In the ninth century, the court university was a competitive institution because academic success improved the chances of promotion at court for men from lesser aristocratic families such as the Sugawara. Stories survive of men who passed the entrance examination in middle age after repeated failures. Michizane had no such difficulty, but years later he claimed that in his student days he had no time for his friends and family. Although his erudition confirms that he must have been a studious youth, the following poems reveal some of the pleasures and frustrations he experienced as a young man.

At the Rōka, Reciting Poetry to Send Off the Setting Sun

This poem was written around 869 when Michizane, aged twenty-five by Japanese count, was still a university student. *Rōka* (literally, "hallway") was a nickname given to the section of the Sugawara mansion where the family maintained a private school that prepared young men for admission to the university. A group of them have joined Michizane in his study. This poem is about poetry, wine, friendship, and the passage of time, all of which are common elements in Chinese literature and give this poem a Chinese feeling, amplified by the allusion in line 4. Although this poem can be taken as an example of Japanese youths playing at being Chinese, readers should keep in mind that Ōtomo no Tabito (665–731) had begun writing waka in praise of wine well over a century before this and that the passage of time had become a staple topic of Japanese literature.

19

A lovely day, who would want to waste it?
Valued friends unexpectedly come to visit.
In their presence the chamber blossoms anew,
as if they brought the bamboo grove of old.[38]
Several cups and we are intoxicated;
a few poems make us intimate friends.[39]
Times like this, easily lost, impossible to regain:
with regret we see evening shadows about to fall.

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38. This is an allusion to the Chinese Seven Sages of the Bamboo Grove, third-century Daoist recluses who gathered to enjoy wine, conversation, and literature.

39. The word translated as "intimate friends," *chiin*, literally means "know the sound," and alludes to *Liezi*, a Daoist work in which a character recognizes a friend just by hearing the sound of the music he plays. In this case, Michizane is suggesting that he recognizes the sounds of his friends' poems.

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I Give Up Practicing the Koto

This poem was written later in the same year as the previous poem. The *koto* here is the seven-string *kin no koto*, which was popular in the early Heian period. This poem is an early example of Michizane's identifying himself not only as a poet but also as the scion of a family of literary men.

38

Firmly I believed *koto* and calligraphy to be a scholar's solace,
so beneath the window of my study rests a seven-string instrument.
I focus my mind to no avail; in vain I study the score.
As my hand makes many mistakes, repeatedly I question my teacher.
My "Deep Valley" nowhere has the sound of an autumn brook.
My "Shivering Crow" lacks the sadness of its cry at night.[40]
Musicians all agree I am wasting my time.
Much better our family tradition of reciting poetry!

CHILDREN

Children were not a central concern of waka. By contrast, following the conventions of Chinese poetry, Michizane wrote affectionately about his children but barely mentions his wife and says nothing of the concubines he must have had if we are to believe the claim that he fathered twenty-three children. In addition to the examples translated here, both dating from his years in Sanuki, Michizane composed a poem recalling a son who had died in childhood and another to comfort the children who had accompanied him into exile.[41]

Speaking of My Children

This poem was written in 888 when Michizane, then forty-four, was governor of Sanuki. In this example, the disparaging remarks about his children and the elegiac tone might be read as clichés, but the concerns expressed may have been real. Michizane was certainly far from home, and the Sugawara held only middling status among court aristocrats. Their success was based on the literary skills of Michizane and his immediate forebears.

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40. "Deep Valley" and "Shivering Crow" are names of musical pieces for the koto.

41. Burton Watson translated other poems about Michizane's children in *Japanese Literature in Chinese: Poetry and Prose in Chinese by Japanese Writers of the Early Period* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1975), 1:90–91, 113.

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260

My sons are foolish, my daughters ugly: such is their nature.
The proper times to celebrate their adulthood have slipped by.
Flowers that bloom on a winter tree lack crimson hue.
Birds raised in a dark valley are slow to take wing.
My family has no property; it must rely on me.
My profession is literature, but who shall inherit it?
Such thoughts are as pointless as lamenting old age,
yet when I speak of my children so far away, I feel sad.

Unable to Sleep

Written in 889, while Michizane was still in Sanuki, this poem is the first in a series of nine quatrains that Michizane tells us he wrote on a sleepless winter night. Two on Buddhist themes are translated later. In others, he recites poetry, hears the wind in an old pine, and so forth. Whereas some of Michizane's poetry is highly allusive and displays learned techniques, these and other more personal poems usually are in a more easily accessible style requiring fewer footnotes.

308

Unable to sleep, I fitfully spend the night
pained by thoughts of home in the eastern half of the capital,
its bamboo grove and flower garden completely neglected.
I hear a grandchild was born to my daughter in the seventh month.

CAREER

Whereas the vernacular literature leaves the impression that Heian courtiers devoted most of their time to romance and poetry, Michizane's writing in Chinese reminds us that most poets had official careers as well. During his years in high office, virtually all Michizane's poetry consisted of the formal verse needed for court ceremonies; presumably he did not have time for the more personal poems that require fewer footnotes for modern readers. The third poem in this section is a waka from this period, included here to illustrate the type of occasion requiring poetry from a high official. It also demonstrates how waka adapted a poetic technique, a metaphor in the form of feigned confusion, found in Chinese poetry, as in the first poem.

Through the Snow to Morning Duties

This poem was written in 876 when Michizane was the deputy assistant minister of popular affairs. The court offices held morning and evening rites, and Michizane is reporting for the former.

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73

Wind-sent tolling of palace bell: I hear the sound of dawn,[42]
encouraging me on my way through powdery snow.
Matching my status, I wear a fur coat three feet long;
just right to warm my mouth, two drafts of wine.
I wonder if it could be floss my groom is clutching,
and am startled to see my tired horse trod drifting clouds.[43]
In my office, not a moment's rest:
puffing on my hand a thousand times, I keep drafting documents.[44]

Professorial Difficulties

Written in 882, five years after Michizane was appointed professor of literature, this poem suggests that students at the court university took a serious interest in advancing their career, if not necessarily their studies.

87

My family is not one of generals.
As Confucian scholars we earn our keep.
My revered grandfather attained the third rank.
My kind father's office was high court noble.[45]
Well, they knew the power of learning
and wished to bequeath it for their descendants' glory.
The day I was promoted to advanced student,[46]
I resolved to master the craft of my forefathers.
The year I became a professor,

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42. Literally, he hears "the morning clepsydra." In this poem, Michizane plays with perceptions in a manner that, adopted from Chinese models, became characteristic of the waka of his day. In this case, instead of seeing the dawn, he hears it, as measured by the clock and sounded by the bell.

43. Pretending to confuse snow with floss or clouds, Michizane again is using a Chinese technique, a form of metaphor, that became common in waka.

44. Michizane breathes on his hands to warm them as he drafts official documents, which would have been written in Chinese, Michizane's specialty.

45. Michizane's grandfather Kiyokimi (770–843) had served as professor of literature and in 839 was awarded the exalted third rank. Michizane's father, Koreyoshi (812–880), after also serving as professor of literature, became a high-ranking noble (*kugyō*) in 872 when he was given the office of consultant (*sangi*), placing him among the highest officials in the land.

46. *Shūsai* or *tokugōshō*, sometimes translated as "advanced students of literature," were specially selected students who prepared for the civil service examination. Michizane was given this title at the unusually young age of twenty-three.

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happily, the lecture hall was rebuilt.
When everyone rushed to congratulate me,
my father alone expressed concern.
Why did he express concern?
"Alas, you are an only child," he said;
"the office of professor is not mean,
the salary of a professor is not small.
Once I too held this post
and learned to fear people's feelings."
Having heard this kind admonition,
I proceeded with care as if walking on ice.
In the fourth year,[47] the council met
and ordered me to lecture the students.
But after teaching only three days,
my ears heard slanderous voices.
This year, evaluating students for advancement,
the decisions were absolutely clear.
But the first student dropped for lack of talent,
denounced me, and begged unearned promotion.
In my teaching, I did not make mistakes.
My selections for advancement were fair.
How true was my father's advice
when he warned me before all this occurred.

At the chrysanthemum contest held at the same time,[48] the following poem was set on a curved tray on which chrysanthemums were arranged in the shape of the beach at Fukiage.[49]

KOKINSHŪ, NO. 272

akikaze no	In autumn wind,
Fukiage ni tateru	stirred up at Fukiage,
shiragiku wa	white chrysanthemums:

47. The fourth year of the Gangyō era (880), three years after Michizane had been named professor of literature. Normally there were two professors of literature, and at the time of his appointment, his former civil service examiner was the other one. Apparently, Michizane did not begin giving formal lectures until after the senior professor had died in 879.

48. This follows a poem identified as having been written during the Kanpyō era (889–898), when Michizane was at the height of his political power.

49. Fukiage is the name of a beach in the modern Wakayama Prefecture. Michizane makes a pun on the name, which means something like "blown about."

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hana ka aranu ka are they flowers or not,
nami no yoseru ka. or are they waves coming in?

INTELLECTUAL WORLD

When Michizane wrote in his official capacity, he often adopted Confucian themes, much as his Chinese counterparts did, but he turned to Daoism when at leisure. Buddhism, too, appears often in his works, and he also wrote one Shinto prayer. This syncretic approach was typical of his day. Michizane's Confucian poetry at court consists of formal compositions extolling, for example, the merits of a Confucian classic on the occasion of a university ritual. As a governor, however, Michizane turned to Chinese models that, in keeping with Confucian teachings, point out social wrongs and suggest how a more enlightened administration might rectify them. Despite their Chinese precedents, Michizane's poems include details specific to Sanuki. His sympathetic attitude contrasts sharply with the more familiar condescending references to commoners in later vernacular literature. Michizane's Daoist poems typically express a wish to retire from the cares of official life. Some were written on excursions into the countryside; the following one was inspired by dismay over a controversy at court. As with his Confucian poetry, Michizane's Buddhist poems include works composed for public ceremonies and more personal expressions of faith, such as those translated here.

Early Cold

Written in 887 during Michizane's first autumn in Sanuki, this is the first in a series of ten poems, each describing the suffering of local people: an elderly widower, an orphan, and so forth. This one refers to the government's registration of peasants in order to assign them land to be cultivated and taxed. In the ninth century, the system was collapsing. One reason was that peasants fled to avoid taxes, although flight did not always solve their problem, as Michizane notes.

200

Who feels the cold air first?
First cold is the man who fled but was sent back.
I search the registers but nowhere is a new returnee.
Asking his name, I determine his former status.
The land in his native village is barren,
his fate always to be poor.
If men are not treated compassionately,
surely many will continue to flee.

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This is a series of four quatrains in the form of a dialogue, written in Sanuki in 888. Again, Michizane is portraying himself as a dutiful Confucian governor, concerned with the welfare of the poorest of his province's people.

A Question to "Old Man Rush Basket"

228

"Pardon my asking, white-haired old man,
but why are you named 'Rush Basket'?
How old are you and where do you live?
Please tell me why you are lame and bent over."

A Reply Composed in Place of the Old Man

229

"My name 'Rush Basket' comes from my craft.
Fully sixty years old, I live east of the mountain.
I suffered festering boils that crippled my legs
I do not remember the year, but I was just a little boy."

Another Question

230

"Come, let me ask, do you have further difficulties?
The infirmities of old age are the result of long life,
but selling baskets in the village must bring a poor reward.
Surely you cannot have avoided hunger and cold."

Another Answer

231

"I have two daughters, three sons, and one old wife.
In or out of my thatched hut, their voices join in complaint.
But this morning we are comforted by your kind inquiry."
As he left, leaning on a staff, I granted him a measure of rice.[50]

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50. Literally, "one *to* of rice." A *to* was one-tenth of the more familiar *koku*, which in later times was approximately five bushels. In the Heian period, it was much less.

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While Traveling by Boat

This poem is the first in a series of five on Daoist themes written in 887 when Michizane returned to the capital for a brief visit during his term as governor of Sanuki. Here he alludes to a serious political dispute, masquerading as a learned debate over the meaning of an ancient Chinese office. It was preoccupying many of his friends and left Michizane wishing he could retire to enjoy the reclusive pleasures of a hermit.

236

On the shore a single pine
amid layers of rocky cliffs.
The pine preserves its solitary spirit,
for the shore is blocked in all directions.
The lot of its branches is to grow old, still short,
by nature its flourishing needles are fine.
Insentient clouds spontaneously gather,
lightly covering its boughs with snow.
Even if confronted by angry waves,[51]
its firm roots are safe from attack.
Even the master carpenters of old[52]
would find its gnarled wood useless.
Red trees grow in the southeast isles.
Yellow willows flourish on the northwest peaks.
The wealthy always love to use them,
and greedy officials gather them at will.
They are hacked by knives, chopped with axes.
Born in spring, they do not last through winter.
Elegance is truly to be feared![53]
I too would like to dwell on the isolated shore.

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51. Literally, "although threatened by the Marquis Yang's anger." During China's Warring States period (403–221 B.C.E.), the marquis of Yang is said to have drowned and become a water god who, when angered, would stir up waves and sink boats. Accordingly, the term "marquis of Yang" also came to mean simply "waves." The parallel couplet that follows suggests this is meant as a reference to Chinese history.

52. Or, more literally, "even the masters Ban and Shi," two famous craftsmen found in the Chinese classics: Gongshu Ban in *Mencius*, and Master Shi in *Zhuangzi*.

53. The word translated as "elegance," *monjō*, also means "literature." Michizane is saying that like the gnarled, useless pine he sees on an isolated shore, he would be safer enjoying Sanuki's rustic pleasure than seeking a post in the capital that might seem more suitable for a literary scholar but might result only in getting caught up in disagreeable or even dangerous political squabbles.

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Michizane wrote the following poems during his previously noted sleepless winter night in Sanuki. Immediately after thinking about his newborn grandchild, his thoughts turn to religion, although if he were as good a Buddhist as he claims to be, family matters would not concern him. Away from home in the capital, he regularly describes himself as a "wanderer" or, more literally, a "guest."

Mountain Temple Bell

310

From a thatched hall, locked deep in verdant haze of pine,
its sounds escape from suffering: the bell before the dawn.
Sent far by the wind, its tolling startles this wanderer from his dreams.
Surely it would stir even monsters of the sea or dragons in the valley stream.

Reciting Sutras

311

In this room, neither children nor wife, but a monk, his head covered,
one hand in a *mudra*,[54] incense burning before a single lamp.
From memory reciting three or four meditation sutras,[55]
I thus observe monastic abstinence, more pure than ice.

EXILE

Just as Michizane's public career resembled that of the Chinese scholar officials whose writings he so admired, exile also was a fate shared with some of China's greatest poets. In his last years, Michizane joined them in lamenting his misfortunes and protesting his innocence. The poetry he wrote in Kyushu alludes to both the specific circumstances of his exile and the appropriate Chinese exemplars. The following examples begin shortly before his exile and end with his last poem.

By Imperial Command, on the Morning After the Ninth Day, All Wrote Poems on "Autumn Thoughts"

This poem was composed in 900, shortly before Michizane was banished. Its occasion was the Chrysanthemum Festival, celebrated on the ninth day of the Ninth Month,

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54. A ritual gesture in esoteric Buddhism.

55. Literally, "Zen sutras," "Zen" here simply meaning "meditation." Although texts associated with the Zen sect were known in the Japan of Michizane's day, they were associated with older, established sects.

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when literati gathered at the palace to compose poems in Chinese on a theme selected by the emperor. Michizane wrote this before the break of dawn on the day after the festival. It so touched the emperor that he gave Michizane a robe. Although the sentiments expressed are conventional, Michizane alluded to the episode in a poem translated later, and it became a key element in later recountings of his life.

473

Your minister, through the years, has had his cheerful thoughts,
but this night, everything arouses only sadness:
the voice of the cold cricket in the blowing wind,
leaves falling from the paulownia tree, struck by the rain.
You, my lord, are at your peak, while gradually I grow old.[56]
Your generosity has been boundless, my repayment always slow.
Not knowing how to assuage this feeling,
I drink wine, listen to the *koto*, and recite poems.[57]

Seeing the Plum Blossoms When Sentenced to Exile

This is Michizane's best-known poem written in Japanese. He is said to have particularly admired plum blossoms (*ume*), and, according to legend, the tree in his garden was so touched by this poem that it flew to be with him at his place of exile.

SHŪISHŪ, NO. 1006

kochi fukaba	When the east wind blows,
nioi okoseyo	send me your fragrance,
ume no hana	plum blossoms:
aruji nashi tote	although your master is gone,
haru o wasuruna	do not forget the spring.

Of Myself

This is the first poem that Michizane wrote in exile.

476

Since leaving home, three or four months;
streaks of falling tears, hundreds and thousands.

---

56. The emperor was then sixteen; Michizane, fifty-six.

57. Wine, koto, and poetry were the "three friends" of Bo Juyi (772–846), the Chinese poet whom Michizane most admired.

Bahan dengan hak cipta

All things, just like a dream,
constantly I look up and plea to heaven.

Ninth Month, Tenth Day

This was composed exactly one year after his poem "Autumn Thoughts," which so impressed the emperor. "Ninth Month, Tenth Day" is one of Michizane's most admired poems in Chinese, appealing in particular to certain Japanese nationalists for its expression of reverence for the emperor who had exiled him. The poem includes notes, presumably written by Michizane, after three of the lines. As in the original, they appear as interlinear comments, here enclosed in parentheses.

482

Last year on this night, attending at Seiryō,
(The name of the imperial residence)
my poem "Autumn Thoughts" expressed my lonely grief.
(By imperial command, we composed poems on "autumn thoughts." Mine expressed much frustration.)
Generously bestowed, that imperial robe is now beside me here.
I lift it everyday to revere its lingering scent.
(I write this because after the banquet ended that night, the emperor gave me a robe that I keep with me in a box.)

Autumn Night, the Fifteenth Day of the Ninth Month

This was written a few days after the preceding poem, on the fifteenth of the month, the night of the full moon. As in so many of the poems he wrote in exile, Michizane protests his innocence while complaining of his personal hardships.

485

My complexion a withered yellow, topped by white frost,
worse still, I am banished over a thousand *ri* from home.[58]
Once ensnared in the trappings of glory,
now I am an exile, imprisoned amid rustic weeds.
The moon, shining like a mirror, exposes no crime.
The wind, blowing with swordlike force, cannot end my protests.

---

58. In earlier times, a *ri* had been approximately 1770 feet, but around Michizane's day an alternative "great *li*" of approximately 2.5 miles also was used. In literary works, phrases such as "a thousand *ri*" were commonly used to mean simply "a great distance."

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Looking or listening, both make me shiver.
This year's autumn is my own personal autumn.

The Nineteenth Day of the Second Month

This poem was written in 902. Whereas Michizane overcame his initial dislike of Sanuki, he had little good to say about Dazaifu. In this poem, he inadvertently reminds us that it was a major commercial center, if not a cultural one.

499

In the western district, north of the road, only the voices of merchants.
No willows, no blossoms, no cry of the warbler.
Since the coming of spring, fifty days have passed,
yet I find not one thing that stirs the feeling of spring.

In Exile, Spring Snow

This is Michizane's last poem, written almost exactly one year after the preceding one. In it, he discovers some flowers in Dazaifu, the plum blossoms he is said to have so admired. He died on the twenty-fifth day of the Second Month, 903, probably not long after writing this. According to the lunar calendar, spring usually began in February, and so "spring snow" was not, in fact, uncommon. Perhaps still more common were poems pretending that the plum blossoms of that month were snow.

514

Filling the town, overflowing the district, so many plum blossoms.
Wind rustling them in the sunlight, the first flowers of the year!
They stick to the feet of the geese, just like pieces of cloth.[59]
They dot the heads of crows: perhaps I will return home.[60]

[Introduction and translations by Robert Borgen]

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59. In the Han dynasty, Su Wu was a captive of barbarians for nineteen years. He attached to a goose's leg a message written on a piece of cloth. The emperor shot the goose, learned of Su Wu's misfortune, and sent troops to rescue him.

60. Prince Dan of Yan, held hostage by the king of Qin, was told he could return home when crows' heads turned white and horses grew horns. When that happened in response to his prayers, he was allowed to go home.

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KOKINSHŪ (*COLLECTION OF ANCIENT AND MODERN POEMS*, CA. 905)

The *Kokin wakashū* (*Collection of Ancient and Modern Poems*), informally known as *Kokinshū*, is an anthology of 1,111 Japanese poems (in the most widely circulated editions) compiled and edited in the early tenth century. The collection begins with a *kana* (Japanese) preface and, in some editions, concludes with a postface in Chinese. The *Kana* Preface, opening with the famous words "Japanese poetry takes as its seed the human heart," was long regarded as a model of classical prose and, line for line, is undoubtedly the most heavily commented secular prose text of the Japanese tradition. The poems are divided into twenty scrolls or books (*maki*), each of whose titles refers to a conventional poetic topic (the seasons, love, parting, mourning, miscellaneous or "mixed" topics) or to a genre ("acrostic" poems, "mixed" or miscellaneous forms, poems of the "Bureau of Song"). Most of the poems (all but nine, in fact) are in the form of waka (thirty-one-syllable Japanese poem), the canonical form of Japanese poetry from the eighth until the late nineteenth century.

The *Kokinshū*'s poems can be roughly divided into three periods, which also reflect certain broad stylistic differences: anonymous poems of the early to mid-ninth century or before; those of the age of the Six Poetic Immortals, the mid-ninth century; and poems by the editors and their contemporaries, from the late ninth and early tenth centuries. Well over half the poems are attributed to nearly 130 known poets, mostly of the late ninth century. Of the approximately 450 anonymous poems, many are believed to derive from folk songs, although some Heian and medieval commentaries assert, plausibly enough, that the editors deliberately identified as anonymous certain poems by those of the highest social rank, others by persons of very low status, some of those by the compilers themselves, and poems that touched on various taboos.

The waka is defined prosodically as a poem of thirty-one syllables grouped according to a pattern of five *ku*, or measures, of, respectively, 5, 7, 5, 7, and 7 syllables, each of which is also required to be grammatically independent in that the phrasal breaks in syntax regularly coincide with the divisions between successive measures. At a higher level of organization, the first three measures were traditionally called the *kami-no-ku* (upper measure) and the last two, the *shimo-no-ku* (lower measure). Although this was a purely quantitative distinction, it reflects a tendency (increasingly evident after the late twelfth century) to place a strong syntactic break after the third measure and less often after the first, resulting in what is called a 7/5 rhythm (as opposed to the alternative, a 5/7 rhythm in which breaks occur after a seven-syllable measure). The 7/5 rhythm is a characteristic distinguishing the later poetry of the *Kokinshū* from that of the eighth-century anthology *Man'yōshū* and much oral poetry, including many of the early anonymous poems of the *Kokinshū*, which favor breaks after the second and

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fourth measures. By the time of the early-thirteenth-century anthology *Shinkokinshū*, the 7/5 rhythm had become established as the waka's dominant rhythm.

A majority of the poems in the *Kokinshū* can be parsed syntactically as a single compound sentence or as two simple sentences. In the latter case, these often are in a relation between question and answer, enigma or dilemma and (often inadequate) solution, or a generalization followed by a restrictive condition. Exceptions abound, and some of the anthology's most memorable poems can be read as lyrical observations of how things are. But it is safe to say that a questioning or plaintive mood prevails, with the poet asking why things must be as they are or why experience does not better agree with either reason or imagination. This prevailing mood has earned the *Kokinshū* (or, more precisely, the middle- and later-period poems usually taken to typify the anthology) a reputation for ironic wit and ratiocination that in turn has, in a favorable interpretation, been read as evidence of a sophisticated awareness of the discrepancies between language and reality or, in a less sympathetic reading, as indulgence in sophistry or sheer wordplay.

Along a somewhat different axis, later scholars and critics have debated whether this interrogative mood reflects the ironic affirmation of a recently acquired technical facility of poetic expression; a sense of nostalgic resignation, even of despair, perhaps inspired by the dissemination of Buddhist doctrine; the increasing political hegemony of the Fujiwara lineage; or some combination of these. It is up to the reader to decide, but even though individual poems do display a fairly wide range of tonal variation, few, especially those in the seasonal and love books (which together make up more than two-thirds of the collection) are completely free of irony, and only a rather small minority of the *Kokinshū*'s poems can be counted as celebratory or "pastoral" without qualification.

The immense prestige of the *Kokinshū* as the unrivaled canon of classical waka, especially after its recanonization in the late twelfth century, meant that it largely determined the range of acceptable variations on a given poetic motif as well as the rules of decorum governing the choices of diction and topics. Some of the most influential poets of the late twelfth century (including Shunzei, Saigyō, and Kamo no Chōmei, as well as Teika) asserted that the *Kokinshū*'s poetry represented the whole range of acceptable styles for serious poetry.

Most, though not all, of the *haikai* poetry in the *Kokinshū* is gathered in a subsection of book 19, "Mixed Forms," suggesting that although prosodically identical with waka, haikai was regarded as a distinct genre. This book apparently was thus classified on the basis of its unorthodox (colloquial or archaic) diction as well as its obtrusive irony or wit (to the editors of the *Kokinshū*, the term *haikai* seems to have meant "discordant" or "dissonant" as well perhaps as "comic"). If we regard haikai as marking the lower bound of decorum, then its antithesis, *yūgen* (mystery and depth), represented, at least for medieval readers, the surpassing ideal that few poems in fact achieved.

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One quality of the *Kokinshū* that helped define its authority as the paradigm against which subsequent imperial anthologies (there were twenty) were measured and on which they were modeled and that may account for the number of years apparently spent compiling the anthology is the manifest care its editors applied to the structural arrangement of individual poems in sequences within each book, most conspicuously in the sequences of seasonal and travel poems. These many arrangements include temporal progression through the seasons and through the stages of a courtly love affair, subsequences of topical images with subtle variations in treatment, alternation of anonymous (older) poems with those by contemporary (new or modern) authors and of rhythmic forms (poems with a caesura after the second versus those with one after the third measure), patterns in which strongly original poems are set off by more conventional verses, and so forth. Medieval exegetes were very attentive to these principles of arrangement, which they identified as *budate* (structure of the book or section) and *shidai* (sequence) and regarded as more pertinent than satisfactorily interpreting individual poems in the context of the anthology.

One consequence of the editors' concern with arranging the poems into larger, aesthetically tangible patterns was that they omitted some of the finest poems at their disposal (most of which were eventually used by later anthologists) but included many that have never since been esteemed very highly. The *Kokinshū* sufficiently mapped the world of courtly poetic topoi such that (supplemented by the two later imperially commissioned anthologies, the *Gosenshū* and the *Shūishū*) it was regarded for centuries as an indispensable guide for aspiring poets. But it was evidently not meant to be a treasury of all (and only) the best poetry of its age, and it has rarely been regarded as such. Instead, thanks to the care with which it was arranged, the *Kokinshū* is an eminently readable anthology, which may have contributed as much to its endurance as the excellence of its finest poems.

The *Kana* Preface

The *Kana* Preface to the *Kokinshū*, by Ki no Tsurayuki, foremost among the editors of the anthology, was among the earliest statements of Japanese poetics and by far the most influential. The passage translated here is an assertion of the universal value of poetry and of waka in particular.

The songs of Japan take the human heart as their seed and flourish as myriad leaves of words.[61] As long as they are alive to this world, the cares and deeds of

61. "Songs" is a translation of the word *uta*, which literally means "song" but was also used

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men and women are endless, so they speak of things they hear and see, giving words to the feelings in their hearts. Hearing the cries of the warbler among the blossoms or the calls of the frog that lives in the waters, how can we doubt that every living creature sings its song? Not using force, it moves heaven and earth, makes even the unseen spirits and gods feel pity, smoothes the bonds between man and woman, and consoles the hearts of fierce warriors—such a thing is poetry.

Spring 1

1

Composed on a day when spring arrived within the old year.

toshi no uchi ni	Spring has come
haru wa kinikeri	before the year's turning:
hitotose o	should I speak now
kozo to ya iwamu	of the old year
kotoshi to ya iwamu	or call this the new year?[62]

Ariwara no Motokata[63]

2

Composed on "the first day of spring."

sode hijite	Waters I cupped my
musubishi mizu no	hands to drink, wetting
kooreru o	my sleeves, still frozen:

---

to refer to Japanese poetry, as opposed to Chinese (which was called *shi*). Tsurayuki, the author of the *Kana* Preface, plays on both senses of the word throughout this passage. The metaphor "leaves of words" depends on a conventional pun, linked here to the metaphor of the heart (*kokoro*, or "heart/mind") as a seed.

62. The poem plays on a discrepancy between the official lunar and the unofficial solar calendars. Risshun, the first day of spring by the solar calendar, always occurs on February 4 or 5 (by the Gregorian calendar). In the lunar calendar, the new year begins on the day of the new moon, variably between January 21 and February 19. Hence about once every two years, the (lunar) first day of spring preceded the (solar) New Year's Day. The theme of "time out of joint" is pervasive in early classical waka, often (see *Kokinshū*, nos. 2 and 3) hinging on a contrast between convention and perception. Some medieval exegetes interpreted this poem as a compact allegory of the chiasmus of "old" and "new," alluding to the *Kokinshū* editors' apparent program of thoughtfully intercalating old (late eighth and early to mid-ninth century) poems with new (late ninth to early tenth century).

63. Dates unknown. Motokata was a grandson of Narihira, but little is known about his career. He is the author of fourteen poems in the *Kokinshū*.

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haru tatsu kyou no	might this first day of
kaze ya tokuramu	spring's wind thaw them?[64]

Ki no Tsurayuki[65]

3

Topic unknown.

harugasumi	Where are the promised
tateru ya izuko	mists of spring?
Miyoshino no	In Yoshino, fair hills
Yoshino no yama ni	of Yoshino, snow
yuki wa furitsutsu	falling still.[66]

Anonymous[67]

35

Topic unknown.

ume no hana	I lingered only a moment
tachiyoru bakari	beneath the plum blossoms
arishi yori	and now I am

---

64. The topic calls for the "Anticipation of Spring," never soon enough. The theme is an implied contrast between the calendar, which has announced the arrival of spring and its warm breezes, and the conceit of sleeves wet with water from the previous year's summer that are still frozen with winter's cold. Although the promise of spring remains unfulfilled, by taking the compass of three successive seasons, the poet affirms his faith in the calendar.

65. His dates are thought to be around 870 to 945. Despite his relatively humble social status, Tsurayuki was, in his later years, among the most highly respected poets of his age. One of four poets commissioned to compile the *Kokinshū*, he was effectively its editor in chief, and the collection closely conforms to his tastes. As the author of the *Kana* Preface to the anthology, the single most canonical statement of the principles of native Japanese poetry, his influence on the tradition was immense and remained unquestioned until the end of the nineteenth century. As a poet, he was a consummate technician as well as the author of many of the most memorably lyrical poems in the anthology.

66. The topic is "Lingering Snow." The sequence has established the arrival, by the calendar, of spring. Yoshino, with mountains among the deepest in the Yamato region and the vicinity of the capital, was a poetic place-name (*utamakura*) noted for both heavy snowfall and cherry blossoms. The poet complains (complaint is among the most common moods of *Kokinshū* poetry) that despite the official arrival of spring, the mists (much less the flowers) of spring have yet to appear.

67. "Anonymous" poems are those for which the editors did not have a reliable attribution—in most cases, poems of the late eighth or early ninth century circulated orally—or for which they had reasons not to identify the author in a collection commissioned by the emperor and subject to his approval.

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hito no togamuru	blamed for my
ka ni zo shiminuru	scented sleeves.[68]

Anonymous

Spring 2

69

Topic unknown.

harugasumi	On hills where mists of spring
tanabiku yama no	trail, glowing faintly,
sakurabana	do the flowers' fading
utsurowamu to ya	colors foretell
iro kawariyuku	their fall?[69]

Anonymous

70

Topic unknown.

mate to iu ni	If saying "stay!"
chirade shi tomaru	would stop their
mono naraba	falling, could I hold
nani o sakura ni	these blossoms
omoimasamashi	more dear?[70]

Anonymous

---

68. In the context of its presumed source, the personal collection of Fujiwara no Kanesuke (d. 933), this is a love poem sent to a woman facetiously complaining that incense, redolent of apricot (or plum) blossoms, burned to scent her robes, has infused his own, and that their relationship has thus been discovered by members of his household. That his complaint is facetious is attested by the evidence that he sent this poem to the woman (who knows better) by way of stating his intention not to be dissuaded. The editors signal their intentions to reread this as a seasonal poem on the topic "Plum Blossoms," not as a love poem, by listing it as anonymous.

69. Mist and cherry blossoms are the preeminent images of spring. The placement of this poem at the beginning of the second book of spring asserts that the imminent fading of the blossoms, perhaps showing through a screen of (faint pink, by Chinese poetic convention) mist, marks the passage beyond the midpoint of the season and thus appropriately opens the second movement of spring. This is the first of a sequence of twenty-one poems on the topic "Falling Cherry Blossoms." (Concerning the importance of topical sequences in the *Kokinshū*, see n. 85.)

70. It is because the blossoms are bound to fall so soon that they are so admired (see *Kokinshū*, no. 71). If one could command them, with a word, to last, their fragile beauty would be diminished. In an earlier context (presumably the late eighth or early ninth century), the anonymous poet's intention may have been, instead, to suggest that if only the blossoms would stay, on demand, nothing could surpass their beauty. Such a reading, though grammatically less plausible, is accepted by some medieval and modern commentators.

مادة محمية بموجب حقوق النشر

71

Topic unknown.

nokori naku	It's their falling without regret
chiru zo medetaki	I admire—
sakurabana	Cherry blossoms:
arite yo no naka	a world of sadness
hate no ukereba	if they'd stayed.[71]

Anonymous

72

Topic unknown.

kono sato ni	I seem bound to sleep
tabine shinu beshi	in this village tonight:
sakurabana	led astray by falling
chiri no magai ni	blossoms, I've forgotten
ieji wasurete	my way home.[72]

Anonymous

73

Topic unknown.

utsusemi no	Are they not like
yo ni mo nitaru ka	this fleeting world?
hanazakura	Cherry blossoms:
saku no mishi ma ni	no sooner do they flower
katsu chirinikeri	than they fall.[73]

Anonymous

---

71. This is a statement of what became the normative aesthetic and ethos of the cherry blossom as a symbol of the fragility of beauty (and the beauty of fragility): it is better to die early than to linger in this world and suffer the consequences, among them an awareness of the vanity of human aspirations and of the futility of living on.

72. Entranced by clouds of falling blossoms, a traveler has lost track of the way home and is resigned to spending the night in an unfamiliar village.

73. In ninth-century usage and later, the phrase *utsusemi no yo* (this fleeting world), with its image of the discarded shell of a cicada, refers to this world of (human) existence as empty and insubstantial *or* as mutable and ephemeral. The force of the simile in this poem draws on the second sense.

مادة محمية بموجب حقوق النشر

103

From the empress's poetry contest in the Kanpyō era.

kasumi tatsu	The hills where
haru no yamabe wa	spring mists rise are distant,
tookeredo	yet the wind comes,
fukikuru kaze wa	bringing the
hana no ka zo suru	blossoms' scent.[74]

Ariwara no Motokata

104

Composed when looking at fading blossoms.

hana mireba	When I gaze on
kokoro sae ni zo	fading blossoms
utsurikeru	this heart, too, would fade with them:
iro ni wa ideji	may my feelings not be seen
hito mo koso shire	lest others come to know.[75]

Ōshikōchi no Mitsune[76]

105

Topic unknown.

uguisu no	To each meadow where
naku nobe goto ni	the warbler cries
kite mireba	I come and see
utsurou hana ni	the wind blow
kaze zo fukikeru	fading flowers.[77]

Anonymous

---

74. A long sequence (forty-one poems) on the topic "Cherry Blossoms Blooming and Falling," extending from the latter part of the first book of spring through the beginning of the second book, is followed by two shorter sequences on the topics "Blossoming Flowers" and "Falling Flowers." These are poems on late spring flowers. This poem concludes the sequence on "Blossoming Flowers."

75. This is the first in the sequence of poems on the topic "Falling Flowers." The speaker seems to fear acquiring a reputation for extreme sensitivity, a quality in which Heian poets took some pride.

76. Late ninth to early tenth century. The author of sixty poems in the *Kokinshū*, one of the compilers of the anthology, and, along with Tsurayuki, a master of compositional technique.

77. Under the topic "Falling Flowers," this is the first of a subsequence of six verses on "Warblers Lamenting the Blossoms." The speaker, viewing the flowers in the meadows where trees are in bloom, finds that in each meadow, warblers are crying and the wind is blowing petals from the boughs and thus infers the relation between the two events. The sense is not that the speaker was drawn by the warblers' cries to seek their cause.

مادة محمية بموجب حقوق النشر

Summer

135

Topic unknown.

wa ga yado no	Wisteria flowers
ike no fujinami	blossom in waves
sakinikeri	on my garden pond:
yamahototogisu	will the mountain cuckoo
itsu ka kinakamu	come, then, and sing?[78]

Anonymous

Some say that no. 135 was composed by Kakinomoto no Hitomaro.[79]

152

Topic unknown.

yayoya mate	Wait, cuckoo,
yamahototogisu	take my message
kotozutemu	to the mountains:
ware yo no naka ni	I, too, have learned
sumiwabinu to yo	to weary of this world.[80]

Mikuni no Machi[81]

Autumn 1

172

Topic unknown.

kinou koso	Only yesterday
sanae torishika	seedlings were planted:

78. The topic is "Early Summer." The flowers of the garden are mirrored in the surface of the pond, their reflection perhaps superimposed on waves raised by an early summer breeze. The mountain cuckoo (*hototogisu*) is the dominant image of the brief book of summer in the *Kokinshū*, appearing in twenty-five of the thirty-four poems and associated, in the *Kokinshū* and after, with the Fifth and Sixth Months of the lunar calendar. Summer begins in the Fourth Month, and the cuckoo has not yet begun to sing. Wisteria blossoms are a late spring/early summer image.

79. The most notable poet of the *Man'yōshū*.

80. The cuckoo was thought to act, like various birds in many traditional cultures, as a messenger between this and other worlds. The intended recipient of the message here may be one who has entered the afterworld, since the cuckoo was also believed to be an intermediary between the living and the dead, or a recluse who has departed from this mundane world to practice austerities in the mountains, the proper abode of the mountain cuckoo (*yama-hototogisu*) addressed in the poem.

81. A member of the Ki family, empress to Ninmyō and sister of Ki no Aritsune. Dates uncertain.

مادة محمية بموجب حقوق النشر

itsu no ma ni	so soon, now,
inaba soyogite	ears of grain tremble
akikaze no fuku	as the autumn wind blows.[82]

Anonymous

176

Topic unknown.

koikoite	Longing and longing
au yo wa koyoi	tonight at last we meet:
Ama no kawa	may the mist rise thick
kiri tachiwatari	on the River of Heaven
akezu mo aranamu	and keep the day from dawning.[83]

Anonymous

222

Topic unknown.

hagi no tsuyu	Should I pluck the drops of dew
tama ni nukamu to	to thread as jewels
toreba kenu	they'd vanish:
yoshi mimu hito wa	best see them as they are,
eda nagara miyo	set on boughs of clover.[84]

Anonymous

Some say that no. 222 was composed by the Nara emperor.

223

Topic unknown.

orite miba	If I were to bend a bough
ochizo shinu beki	to pluck it

---

82. The implied topic is "Autumn Wind." One prevalent theme of early autumn poems, those of the opening of the first book of autumn in the *Kokinshū* and others later in the classical tradition, is surprise at how quickly and stealthily the season arrives. Surprise is registered here by hyperbole: only a day ago, so it seems, the rice seedlings were planted, yet today they are ready for harvesting. The word *soyogite* (tremble) is a weak onomatopoeia of susurration.

83. The topic is Tanabata, Festival of the Herdsman and the Weaver, lovers who were transformed into the stars Altair and Vega in the Milky Way (River of Heaven) and condemned to meet only one night in the year, the seventh of the seventh lunar month. Autumn mist (*kiri*), a strongly seasonal image, is the counterpart of spring mist or haze (*kasumi*). The implied speaker may be either of the two stars or both.

84. The *mitate* (visual metaphor) of dewdrops as evanescent jewels is a familiar one. Dew is closely associated with the bush clover (*hagi*), a distinctive autumn flower.

مادة محمية بموجب حقوق النشر

akihagi no they must surely scatter:
eda mo tawawa ni trembling drops of dew
okeru shiratsuyu on autumn bush clover.[85]

Anonymous

Autumn 2

256

On seeing autumn leaves on Otowa Mountain while visiting Ishiyama.

akikaze no From that first day
fukinishi hi yori the winds of autumn sounded,
Otowayama the tips of trees on
mine no kozue mo Otowa Mountain's peak
irozukinikeri were turning color.[86]

Ki no Tsurayuki

257

Composed for a poetry contest at the house of Prince Koresada.

shiratsuyu no White dew
iro wa hitotsu o all of a single color:
ika ni shite how then does it dye
aki no ko no ha o the leaves of autumn
chiji ni somuramu a thousand different shades?[87]

Fujiwara no Toshiyuki[88]

---

85. Sequences (*shidai*) of poems on the same topic, composed of subtle variations in thematic treatment, are the building blocks that make the *Kokinshū* a coherent and readable text rather than a simple collection of poems arranged topically. Medieval commentators devoted considerable attention to the editors' composition of such sequences (prominent in the seasonal and love books), which come into view only when one poem is read as a response to a preceding poem or series of poems. In this instance, the reader is invited to reread no. 222 against no. 223 and weigh the differences between a conceit and a more literal treatment of the same topic: gemlike droplets of dew on leaves or petals of bush clover.

86. The name Otowa Mountain, a pillow word, makes a pun on the word *oto*, meaning "sound." This is the eighth of a series of nineteen poems on the topic "Autumn Leaves," which opens the second book of autumn. Brightly colored autumn leaves is also the dominant image of the latter part of the season, appearing in more than half the poems in the book. The poem suggests, retrospectively, the idea of nature anticipating the calendar (compare no. 3 and many other spring poems in which the season is perceived as falling behind the calendar).

87. The theory underlying this and the following poems is that dewdrops (together with frost

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258

Composed for a poetry contest at the house of Prince Koresada.

aki no yo no	As the dew of autumn's night
tsuyu o ba tsuyu to	settles in place,
oki nagara	will the falling tears
kari no namida ya	of wild geese
nobe o somuramu	dye the fields yet deeper?[89]

Mibu no Tadamine[90]

259

Topic unknown.

aki no tsuyu	Surely the autumn dew
iroiro koto ni	must have its varied ways
okeba koso	to turn the mountain's leaves
yama no ko no ha no	so many shades
chigusa narurame	of color.[91]

Anonymous

266

Composed for a poetry contest at the house of Prince Koresada.

akigiri wa	Let no autumn mist
kesa wa tachi ni so	rise this morning,
Saoyama no	that I might at least from afar

---

and raindrops of cold autumn showers) are the cause of the coloration of leaves. "White dew" is often a near synonym for "dew," but the specific association of autumn with the color white (following Chinese theories of the "five elements") is exploited here to underscore the paradox. The "thousand different shades" is conventional hyperbole. The primary colors of autumn foliage in classical poetry were red, yellow, and rust.

88. Died early tenth century. Noted for his poems for illustrated standing screens (*byōbu-uta*).

89. Again the theory that dew causes the leaves to change color is invoked. The conceit is that because the wild geese, flying south in autumn, cry, they must shed tears and that since tears are a poetic homologue of dew, those (figurative) tears might combine forces with the dew to intensify the coloration of the grasses of the fields.

90. Late ninth to early tenth century. One of four poets ordered to compile the *Kokinshū*.

91. This poem, a variation on the theme of *Kokinshū*, no. 257, also is a tentative response to that poem's question: it must be something in the way that dew settles on the leaves that accounts for its varied effects: leaves of differing colors.

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hahaso no momiji see the colored leaves
yoso nite mo mimu of the oaks of Mount Sao.[92]

Anonymous

274

Composed on a figure of a person waiting, beside chrysanthemum blossoms, for another person.

hana mitsutsu Looking at flowers,
hito matsu toki wa waiting for my love
shirotae no I took the blossoms
sode ka to nomi zo for the white
ayamatarekeru sleeve of his gown.[93]

Ki no Tomonori[94]

284

Topic unknown.

Tatsutagawa Tatsuta River is
momijiba nagaru flush with red leaves:
Kamunabi no autumn showers must be
Mimuro no yama ni falling on Mimuro Mountain
shigure furu rashi in Kamunabi.[95]

Anonymous

A variant text reads "Asuka River is flush with red leaves . . . "

---

92. This is the penultimate poem in the sequence of nineteen poems on the topic "Colored Autumn Leaves" (*momiji*), which opens the second book of autumn. This sequence is followed by thirteen poems on "Chrysanthemum Flowers," but the topic of *momiji* is then resumed under the rubric "Falling Leaves" (*rakuyō*) in a twenty-five-poem sequence that extends to nearly the end of the book. A parallel is thus established between the sequential arrangement of poems on the topic "Cherry Blossoms" in the two books of spring and these on "Autumn Leaves."

93. An allusion to a verse by the Chinese poet Tao Qian (d. 427), cited by early Kamakura commentators, may have been intended here, but as the *renga* poet Sōgi and his teacher Tō no Tsuneyori asserted, recognition of the allusion adds nothing to an understanding of the poem in the *Kokinshū* context. The "figure" mentioned in the headnote is most likely a model placed on a tray of sand representing, in miniature, a landscape.

94. Of the same lineage as Tsurayuki, he was another of the four poets ordered to compile the *Kokinshū*. He died early in the tenth century, before the collection was completed.

95. *Mimuro*, a noun meaning "sacred grove" or "dwelling place of the gods," became the name of a mountainous area that was the site of Tatsuta Shrine, above the Tatsuta River. Kamunabi (mountains "where gods dwell") refers to the same area, noted for its autumn leaves. The poet speculates on the unseen cause of a very visible (and desirable) effect: a brocade of red and yellow leaves covering the Tatsuta River, downstream from Mimuro.

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289

Topic unknown.

aki no tsuki	Does the autumn moon
yamabe sayaka ni	cast its light so starkly
teraseru wa	on the mountain's edge
otsuru momiji o	that we may count
kazu o miyo to ka	each colored leaf that falls?[96]

Anonymous

290

Topic unknown.

fuku kaze no	The gusting wind
iro no chigusa ni	shows itself
mietsuru ha	in a cloak of many colors:
aki no ko no ha no	a scattering of
chireba narikeri	autumn leaves.[97]

Anonymous

291

Topic unknown.

shimo no tate	Warp of frost, weft of dew,
tsuyu no nuki koso	these must be weak indeed:
yowakarashi	no sooner are they woven than
yama no nishiki no	the mountain's brocades
oreba katsu chiru	scatter in shreds.[98]

Sekio[99]

---

96. The speaker asks why the autumn moon casts its light so starkly (*sayaka*) and proposes an answer: that the moon's intention is to intensify our perception of the falling of leaves and thus of the passage of the season toward winter. It is not "fallen leaves" but "leaves (now) falling" that the speaker sees so clearly.

97. A familiar *mitate* (visual metaphor), autumn leaves seen as a cloak of brocade, dresses another well-worn trope, the wind making itself visible, to create something new. Many of the "new" poems in the *Kokinshū*, those of the late ninth and early tenth centuries, are based on permutations and recombinations of rhetorical precedents rather than on the invention of unfamiliar conceits.

98. Frost and dew are taken to be the agents causing the autumn leaves to turn (see *Kokinshū*, no. 257) and weaving from them a multicolored brocade. "Scatter" (*chiru*) refers to the falling of the leaves.

99. Dates are 805 to 853. A noted calligrapher and musician.

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297

Composed during a visit to the northern hills to pick autumn leaves.

miru hito mo	They must fall
nakute chirinuru	with no one to see them:
okuyama no	red leaves of autumn
momiji wa yoru no	deep in the mountains
nishiki narikeri	like brocades worn by night.[100]

Ki no Tsurayuki

305

Composed and presented in response to an imperial command for a folding screen at Teiji-in depicting a person standing beneath falling autumn leaves, beside a halted horse, about to ford a river.

tachitomari	Let me pause to watch
mite o wataramu	before I cross:
momijiba wa	though they fall like rain
ame to furu tomo	the red leaves
mizu wa masaraji	will not swell the river's waters.[101]

Ōshikōchi no Mitsune

306

Composed for a poetry contest at the house of Prince Koresada.

yamada moru	The dew that settles
aki no kariio ni	on a makeshift hut
oku tsuyu wa	in this mountain field:
inaoosedori no	tears shed by the
namida narikeri	rice-bearing bird.[102]

Mibu no Tadamine

---

100. The poem alludes to a passage in the biography of Xiang Yu in the *Han shu*—"to achieve wealth and glory, and not return to one's native village, is like wearing brocades by night"—which became proverbial for an advantage put to no use.

101. This is the last of a sequence of twenty-five poems on the topic "Falling Leaves" and one of three poems in that sequence that were composed for screen paintings (*byōbu-uta*). As medieval commentators noted in regard to such poems in the *Kokinshū*, the poet was generally expected to assume the point of view of a figure in the painting when composing a poem like this one.

102. The topic is "Autumn Fields." For a similar confusion of dew with the tears of birds, see

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Travel

409

Topic unknown.

honobono to	Into the mist, glowing with dawn,
Akashi no ura no	across the Bay of Akashi
asagiri ni	a boat carries my thoughts
shimagakure yuku	into hiding,
fune o shi zo omou	islands beyond.[103]

Anonymous

Some say that no. 409 was composed by Kakinomoto no Hitomaro.

Love 2

571

From the empress's poetry contest in the Kanpyō era.

koishiki ni	If in despair of love
wabite tamashii	my soul should wander,
madoinaba	am I to be remembered
munashiki kara no	as one who left
na ni ya nokoramu	a corpse in vain?[104]

Anonymous

Kokinshū, no. 258. In this poem, the dew on the hut or its roof is a *mitate* for such tears. The "rice-bearing bird" (*inaoose-dori*), whose identity was debated in early commentaries, became one of the "Three Birds" of the "Secret Teachings of the *Kokinshū*," a knowledge of which was requisite to formal recognition as a waka poet throughout most of the medieval and early Tokugawa periods.

103. Passage into Akashi Bay meant crossing the official gateway at Settsu Province from the inner to the outer provinces, and the implied topic is border crossing. This is one of the most often quoted and allegorically glossed poems of the *Kokinshū* and became one of a core of poems treated as having profoundly esoteric meanings within the "Secret Teachings of the *Kokinshū*." Its reputation was enhanced, certainly, by the attribution to Hitomaro, venerated as one of the deities of the Way of poetry. One Nijō school commentary suggests that the poem, generally regarded as an allegory of the death of Prince Takechi, was deliberately placed by the editors in the book of travel rather than the book of mourning in order to free it from taboos attached to poems of mourning.

104. The speaker asks whether despair at unrequited love might cause her (or his?) soul to depart from her body, leaving a reputation for having lived for nothing more than vain affection. In this context, the auxiliary particle of causation, *kara*, imposes an indecorous pun on the noun *kara*, meaning "empty shell" or "corpse."

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572

From the empress's poetry contest in the Kanpyō era.

kimi kouru	If not for the tears
namida shi naku wa	my loved one makes me shed,
karakoromo	this fine Chinese robe would be
mune no atari wa	singed round the breast
iro moenamashi	with the colors of passion.[105]

Ki no Tsurayuki

Love 3

635

Topic unknown.

aki no yo mo	Autumn nights, long
na nomi narikeri	only in name:
au to ieba	let's meet, we say,
koto zo to mo naku	yet dawn comes to part us
akenuru mono o	before we've begun.[106]

Ono no Komachi[107]

636

Topic unknown.

nagashi to mo	For me, not long
omoi zo hatenu	enough at all:
mukashi yori	autumn nights have always
au hito kara no	taken their measure
aki no yo nareba	from the depths of one's love.[108]

Ōshikōchi no Mitsune

---

105. The topic, as in the previous poem, is "Unrequited Love" and extends the familiar conceit that tears can quench the flames of longing. In *Kokinshū* love poetry, the passion of unrequited love typically leads to resentment and tears of blood. This appears to be an exception.

106. In the vocabulary of classical poetry, which (as in this case) tends to conform to the calendar, autumn nights are longer than those of summer. Not long enough for love, however: the complaint is that the reality fails to live up to the name.

107. Active mid-ninth century. Almost nothing certain is known about Komachi except that she was indisputably the greatest female poet of her age. Some of her poems are among the most erotic in the classical tradition, and she set new standards for technical facility with the use of *kakekotoba* (pivot words and puns). See the section on Ono no Komachi.

108. Mitsune is quoted here as seconding Komachi's judgment in the previous poem and emphasizes that the length of an autumn night is entirely relative.

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637

Topic unknown.

shinonome no	Just as the morning sky
hogara hogara to	is brightening to dawn,
akeyukeba	how sad that we must
ono ga kinuginu	sort our robes
naru zo kanashiki	and part.[109]

Anonymous

638

Topic unknown.

akenu tote	Dawn has come—
ima wa no kokoro	I resign myself to parting:
tsuku kara ni	why then must thoughts
nado iishiranu	I can't find words for
omoi souramu	cling to my heart?[110]

Fujiwara no Kunitsune

639

From the empress's poetry contest in the Kanpyō era.

akenu tote	Dawn has come—
kaeru michi ni wa	on the path home from love
kokitarete	I am drenched:
ame mo namida mo	rainfall swelling
furisohochitsutsu	my falling tears.[111]

Fujiwara no Toshiyuki

---

109. From the "night" of the previous poems, the time advances to morning (*shinonome* refers to the moments just before dawn), and the topic here and in the following series of poems is "Parting at Dawn" (*kinuginu*). *Kinuginu* (literally, "robes," with the sense of "these robes and those") refers to the custom of lovers sharing the clothes they were dressed in for use as bedding for the night, then separating their respective robes in the morning before parting.

110. This and the following two poems continue the theme "Parting at Dawn," which extends through a sequence of about twelve verses.

111. The confusion of tears and rainfall was a cliché, but the poet renews it with the use of uncommon diction, *kokitarete* (drenched), and a pivot word making both rain and tears the subjects of the same verb, *furisohochi* (literally, "to fall and soak through").

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640

Topic unknown.

shinonome no	I begin to cry
wakare o oshimi	regret for our parting
ware zo mazu	even before the rooster
tori yori saki ni	crows the break
nakihajimetsuru	of dawn.[112]

Utsuku

645

When Narihira visited the province of Ise, he met, secretly, the person who was serving as the high priestess. The next morning, before he was able to find a way to send her a message, this poem was delivered from the woman.

kimi ga koshi	Did you come to me?
ware ya yukikemu	Did I visit you?
omooezu	I cannot know.
yume ka utsutsu ka	Dream? Reality?
nete ka samete ka	Was I asleep or awake?

Anonymous

646

Reply.

kakikurasu	I wandered, too,
kokoro no yami ni	in heart-blinding darkness:
madoiniki	was it dream
yume utsutsu to wa	or reality?
yohito sadame yo	Let others decide.

Ariwara no Narihira[113]

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112. The arrival of dawn, conventionally announced by the crowing of a rooster, means that the lover who has been visiting for the night must depart, all too early. Anticipating the bird's cry as well as her own, the speaker contrasts the implacability of time (and of convention) with the depth of her feelings.

113. Ariwara no Narihira (825–880) was a descendant of the imperial family. He had an unsuccessful political career but enjoyed great esteem as a poet and a reputation as an erotic adept. Many of his poems encompass a measure of ironic reflection which invites comparison with those of Ono no Komachi, a close contemporary. For more on Narihira as a legend and poet, see the section on *The Tales of Ise*.

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Love 5

797

Topic unknown.

iro miede	Not changing color
utsurou mono wa	yet fading all the same:
yo no naka no	such is the flower of
hito no kokoro no	the heart of one who survives
hana ni zo arikeru	this world of love.

In an equally plausible reading of the ambiguous verb *miete*, the same poem might be translated as

iro miete	All too visibly
utsurou mono wa	its color fades:
yo no naka no	the flower of the heart
hito no kokoro no	of one passing through
hana ni zo arikeru	this world of love.[114]

Ono no Komachi

Mourning

832

Composed after the Horikawa chancellor died and his remains were interred near Mount Fukakusa.

Fukakusa no	If cherry trees indeed
nobe no sakura shi	have feelings, may those
kokoro araba	of the fields of Fukakusa
kotoshi bakari wa	this year, at least,
sumizome ni sake	shroud themselves in black blossoms.[115]

Kamutsuke no Mineo

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114. The wording of the poem offers two logically opposed readings, depending on whether the verb "to be visible" is interpreted affirmatively (*miete*) or negatively (*miede*), a question the script in which the *Kokinshū* was recorded leaves undecided. A majority of commentators, medieval and modern, have preferred the direct irony of the negative reading reflected in the first of the two translations. Others have argued in favor of the more subtly ironic affirmative reading. A small minority suggest that the *miete/miede* crux is to be taken as a pun (*kakekotoba*), inviting the reader to suspend judgment between the two contrary readings and entertain the possibility that both may be accepted at once.

115. The belief that cherry trees are animate and sentient beings, invoked frequently in classical waka (and in nō drama), likely drew force from folk-religious cults of cherry trees as local deities and further support from syncretic Tendai doctrines of the universal Buddha-mind. The apostrophe in this poem, addressed to the cherry trees, can thus be taken literally. This does not diminish the extremity of the conceit of black blossoms, meant to convey the burden of the speaker's grief.

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Miscellaneous Topics 2

947

Topic unknown.

izuku ni ka	Where might I find
yo o ba itowamu	distaste for this world?
kokoro koso	In pastures and hills alike
no ni mo yama ni mo	my heart yearns
madoubera nare	to stray.[116]

Sosei[117]

981

Topic unknown.

iza koko ni	So be it, let me
waga yo wa henamu	live out my life
Sugawara ya	here in Sugawara Fushimi,
Fushimi no sato no	lest my old home go
aremaku mo oshi	sadly to ruin.[118]

Anonymous

982

Topic unknown.

waga io wa	My house is
Miwa no yamamoto	at the foot of Miwa Mountain:

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116. The poems gathered in the two books of miscellaneous topics are indeed diverse. A few, at the beginning of the first book, are celebratory, but most dwell on themes of disappointment, mortality, and loss. The speaker complains of a double bind: the imperative to flee the corruptive influences of civilization and seek detachment in the purity of the pastoral is undermined by the (eminently civilized) delights of nature, which prove to be no less a distraction from the path to ascetic withdrawal.

117. Active late ninth century. A master of the decorous irony taken to characterize the poetry of his age, Sosei was esteemed by contemporaries as a poet and courtier-cleric and is regarded as one of the leading poets of his age.

118. This and the following three poems, on the topic "Dwellings," were treated in the medieval esoteric teachings as densely allegorical poems uttered by deities or immortals and framed as lessons based on syncretic Shinto–Buddhist and protonativist doctrine. In the sequence here, the poems were understood, on one level, as lamenting the moral corruption of society (suggested by the anticipated ruin of "my old home") that has forced the gods and their Buddhist avatars to manifest themselves in the world and set things right.

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koishiku wa should fondness call,
toburaikimase please visit the gate
sugi tateru kado where cedars stand.

Anonymous

983

Topic unknown.

waga io wa Dwelling to the east
miyako no tatsumi and south of the capital,
shika zo sumu in Uji Hills I live:
yo o ujiyama to some say I've forsaken
hito wa iu nari their sad world.

Monk Kisen[119]

Miscellaneous Forms (haikai)

1015

Topic unknown.

mutsugoto mo Words and acts
mada tsukinaku ni of love yet done
akenumeri and now, too soon, it's dawn:
izura wa aki no what of those "long
nagashi chou yo wa autumn nights"?[120]

Ōshikōchi no Mitsune

1038

Topic unknown.

omou chou If only I could creep
hito no kokoro no into each corner

119. One of the six "immortals" (*kasen*) singled out in the preface to the *Kokinshū* to exemplify the major traditions of waka. This is the only poem in this collection attributed to him, and almost nothing is known about his career.

120. This was likely meant as a parody of Komachi's poem on the same topic (*Kokinshū*, no. 635). Poets of the late Heian era and after were puzzled by the term *haikai* (by which the editors of the *Kokinshū* probably meant "dissonant" poems using archaic or colloquial diction, or obtrusive, vaguely grotesque conceits), with good reason, since a fair number of poems not placed in the haikai section are similar to poems like this one. What marks this poem as haikai is the somewhat colloquial diction, not the topic or its treatment.

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kuma goto ni	of the heart of the one
tachikakuretsutsu	who says she loves me
miru yoshi mo ga na	and keep watch.[121]

Anonymous

[Introduction and translations by Lewis Cook]

THE BIRTH OF VERNACULAR PROSE FICTION

The *monogatari*, or vernacular tale, emerged in the latter half of the ninth century together with the kana syllabary. The earliest extant example is *The Tale of the Bamboo Cutter* (*Taketori monogatari*, ca. 909), considered in *The Tale of Genji* to be the ancestor of the monogatari. The monogatari, which originally meant "desultory conversation," can be traced back to the early chronicles (*Kojiki*, *Nihon shoki*) and the provincial gazetteers (fudoki)—with their myths, histories, and clan legends—as well as to the practice of oral storytelling, which led to anecdotal (*setsuwa*) literature. The most important development in the birth of the monogatari, however, was the use of kana, which allowed for complex psychological description and eventually resulted in *The Tale of Genji*, now considered by many to be the world's first psychological novel.

The Tale of the Bamboo Cutter begins with the set phrase *ima wa mukashi* (now it was long ago) and ends with *to zo iitsutaetaru* (and so it has been passed on), thus preserving, at least in outline, the traditional storytelling conventions found in setsuwa. But in contrast to setsuwa, which claimed to tell the truth, monogatari are admittedly fictional. They may be based on historical events, but they do not purport to be faithful to history. Nonetheless, as noted in the famous defense of fiction in the "Fireflies" (Hotaru) chapter of *The Tale of Genji*, monogatari were often more accurate than the highly regarded historical chronicles in their depiction of people's personal lives, emotions, and thoughts. Unlike such setsuwa collections as the *Nihon ryōiki* and the later *Konjaku monogatari shū*, which often were written to educate the audience in the Buddhist way, the Heian monogatari had no overt didactic purpose.

Monogatari are generally aristocratic in content, depicting the lives of the nobility at court and in the capital. They were written for and by the aristocracy, probably by middle-rank scholar nobles who had considerable exposure to both

121. This could just as well be "the one who says he loves me." It is not the diction so much as the conceit that marks this poem as haikai. The premise is that promises of love invite suspicion and, too often, lead to resentment. The phrase "poems of resentment" (*urami no uta*) became a synonym for "poems of love" (*koi no uta*) early in the classical waka tradition. For a somewhat more decorous variation on the same conceit, compare the poem in section 15 of *The Tales of Ise*: "I long to find a path to the depths of Mount Shinobu that I might fathom the secrets of another's heart." "Shinobu," reputedly the name of a mountain in what is now Fukushima Prefecture and a poetic place-name (*utamakura*), is also a verb meaning "to endure," "conceal," "long for," and "remember."

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Japanese poetry and Chinese fiction. Today, monogatari are divided into two major types: the "fabricated tale" (*tsukuri monogatari*), represented by *The Tale of the Bamboo Cutter*, *The Tale of Ochikubo* (*Ochikubo monogatari*), and *The Tale of the Hollow Tree* (*Utsubo monogatari*), and the "poem tale" (*uta-monogatari*), epitomized by *The Tales of Ise* (*Ise monogatari*), *The Tales of Yamato* (*Yamato monogatari*), and *The Tales of Heichū* (*Heichū monogatari*). Fabricated tales describe fantastic and miraculous events, often involving a journey to an "other world." In contrast, poem tales are stories about poetry and tend to be about love, the four seasons, and nature, the central topics of waka. Both types generally revolve around the topic of love, particularly the private relationships between men and women. *The Tale of Genji*, written in the early eleventh century and considered the best of the Heian monogatari, skillfully combines both types of monogatari with the women's tradition of diary writing.

In the tenth century, when monogatari first flourished, the aristocracy did not consider them serious literature, regarding them as a genre written for women and children. (The most important literature was the historical chronicles and poetry, and the most prestigious writing system was Chinese.) As the preface to the *Illustration of the Three Jewels* (*Sanbōe-kotoba*, 984), which is included here, reveals, the Buddhist clergy had an even more negative view of monogatari, condemning them as fiction and lies. One consequence is that we do not know the names of the authors of any of the monogatari written before *The Tale of Genji*. By the early thirteenth century, however, *The Tales of Ise*, *The Tale of Genji*, and *The Tale of Sagoromo* had achieved—at least among the leading poets of the day, such as Fujiwara no Shunzei and Fujiwara no Teika—canonical status, not as fiction, but as guides to and narratives of the thirty-one-syllable waka, the most prestigious of the vernacular genres.

THE TALE OF THE BAMBOO CUTTER (TAKETORI MONOGATARI, CA. 909)

The Tale of the Bamboo Cutter (*Taketori monogatari*), referred to in *The Tale of Genji* as the "parent of the monogatari," was written around 909. It can be divided into four sections: (1) the story of the poor woodcutter who becomes rich as a result of a miraculous birth; (2) the stories of the five suitors, each of whom unsuccessfully courts the shining princess; (3) the courtship of the shining princess by the emperor; and (4) the return of the shining princess to the moon.

The Tale of the Bamboo Cutter drew heavily on existing legends and folktales, particularly in regard to the story of the bamboo cutter, his discovery of the shining princess, and her return to the moon. In the feathered robe (*hagoromo*) legend, which appears in the earlier provincial gazetteers (*Suruga fudoki* and *Ōmi fudoki*), a heavenly lady descends to earth and her feathered robe is taken away, preventing her from returning to heaven. She then recovers the robe, which has celestial power, and returns to heaven. *The Tale of the Bamboo Cutter*

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also is a story of the origins of words and place-names (such as that of Mount Fuji), a convention found as early as in the fudoki in the ancient period.

Whereas the outer sections of *The Tale of the Bamboo Cutter* are a mixture of various folktales and legends, the inner section, the courtship by the five aristocratic suitors, appears to be a newer addition. Here the author uses satire to reveal the greed, duplicity, pretense, excessive attachment, and materialism of the different suitors, to expose their excessive belief in the power of calculation. The first three of the five suitor stories form a distinct group, whose characters are summarized quickly, and their deception fails. All the suitors are of the highest rank: elite aristocrats—prince, minister of the right (*udaijin*), major counselor (*dainagon*), middle counselor (*chūnagon*)—but none of them acts like a refined, elegant aristocrat. The author was probably a middle-rank scholar-aristocrat who stood at a critical distance from those in power at the time.

In the courtship section, the princess is heartless, disgusted with her suitors, but in the last section, she becomes a human figure: emotional, pensive, and melancholy, emotionally attached to her earthly parents. The narrative thus establishes a contrast between the beautiful, clean moon, where immortals live and there are no melancholy thoughts, and the dirty, polluted world, where people suffer and die. The moon also suggests the Western Paradise (*jōdo*) found in Pure Land Buddhism. This association is reinforced by the descent of the "moon" people, which resembles the *raigō* (heavenly descent) in Pure Land paintings, in which the spirits of the dead are met by a group of heavenly beings who descend on clouds.

Even though the earth is a place of exile and punishment for the princess, she becomes attached to it and finds value in human emotions and the human heart. Her celestial robe represents the divide between the two worlds, and significantly, the princess resists putting it on. The emperor also refuses to drink the elixir left him by the princess, complaining, "What use is it, this elixir of immortality, if one cannot have love?" In short, the human world, a world of pathos, is juxtaposed with and comes into conflict with the world of the moon, which is associated with a Buddhistic world of detachment and no suffering.

The Bamboo Cutter

Many years ago there lived a man they called the Old Bamboo Cutter. Every day he would make his way into the fields and mountains to gather bamboo, which he fashioned into all manner of wares. His name was Sanuki no Miyakko. One day he noticed among the bamboos a stalk that glowed at the base. He thought this was very strange, and going over to have a look, saw that a light was shining inside the hollow stem. He examined it, and there he found a most lovely little girl about three inches tall. The old man said, "I have discovered you because you were here, among these bamboos I watch over every morning and evening. It must be you are meant to be my child."

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He took the little girl in his hands and brought her back home. There he gave the child into the keeping of his old wife, for her to rear. The girl was incomparably beautiful, but still so small they put her in a little basket, the better to care for her.

It often happened afterward that when the Old Bamboo Cutter gathered bamboo he would find a stalk crammed with gold from joint to joint, and in this way he gradually became very rich.

The child shot up under their loving care. Before three months had passed she stood tall as a grown woman, and her parents decided to celebrate her coming of age. Her hair was combed up and they dressed her in trailing skirts. The greatest pains were lavished on her upbringing—they never even allowed her to leave her curtained chamber. This child had a purity of features quite without equal anywhere in the world, and the house was filled with a light that left no corner dark. If ever the old man felt in poor spirits or was in pain, just to look at the child would make the pain stop. All anger too would melt away.

For a long time afterward the old man went on gathering bamboo, and he became a person of great importance. Now that the girl had attained her full height, a diviner from Mimuroto, Inbe no Akita by name, was summoned to bestow a woman's name on her. Akita called her Nayotake no Kaguya-hime, the Shining Princess of the Supple Bamboo. The feast given on the occasion of her name-giving was graced by diversions of every kind and lasted three days. Men and women alike were invited and grandly entertained.

The Suitors

Every man in the realm, whether high or low of rank, could think of nothing but of how much he wanted to win Kaguya-hime, or at least to see her. Just to hear the rumors about her made men wild with love. But it was not easy for those who perched on the fence nearby or lurked around her house, or even for those inside, to catch a glimpse of the girl. Unable to sleep peacefully at night, they would go out into the darkness and poke holes in the fence, attempting in this foolish way to get a peep at her. It was from this time that courting a woman came to be known as "night-crawling."

But all their prowling around the place, where no one showed the least interest in them, was in vain. Even when they made so bold as to address the members of the household, no answer was forthcoming. Many a young noble, refusing to leave the vicinity, spent his nights and days without budging from his post. Suitors of shallower affections decided eventually that this fruitless courtship was a waste of time and ceased their visits.

Five among them, men renowned as connoisseurs of beauty, persisted in their suit. Their attentions never flagged, and they came courting night and day. These were Prince Ishizukuri, Prince Kuramochi, the minister of the right

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Abe no Mimuraji, the major counselor Ōtomo no Miyuki, and the middle counselor Isonokami no Marotari. Whenever these men heard of any woman who was even moderately good-looking, and the country certainly had many such, they burned to see her; and when they heard about Kaguya-hime they wanted so badly to meet her that they gave up all nourishment and spent their time in brooding. They would go to her house and wander aimlessly about, even though nothing was likely to come of it. They wrote her letters that she did not even deign to answer; they penned odes bewailing their plight. Though they knew it was in vain, they pursued their courtship, undaunted by hindrances, whether the falling snows and the ice of mid-winter or the blazing sun and the thunderbolts of the summer.

One day they called the Bamboo Cutter to them, and each in turn got down on his knees and rubbed his hands, imploring the old man, "Please give me your daughter!"

But the old man replied, "The child was not of my begetting, and she is not obliged to obey my wishes." And so the days and the months went by.

Confronted by this situation, the gentlemen returned to their houses, where, lost in despondent thoughts, they prayed and offered petitions to the gods, either to fulfill their love or else to let them forget Kaguya-hime. But, however they tried, they could not put her from their minds. Despite what the old man had said, they could not believe that he would allow the girl to remain unwedded, and this thought gave them hope.

The old man, observing their ardor, said to Kaguya-hime, "My precious child, I realize you are a divinity in human form, but I have spared no efforts to raise you into such a great, fine lady. Will you not listen to what an old man has to say?"

Kaguya-hime replied, "What request could you make of me to which I would not consent? You say I am a divinity in human form, but I know nothing of that. I think of you and you alone as my father."

"Oh, how happy you make me!" exclaimed the old man. "I am now over seventy, and I do not know if my end may not come today or tomorrow. In this world it is customary for men and women to marry and for their families then to flourish. Why do you refuse to be wedded?"

Kaguya-hime said, "How could I possibly do such a thing?"

The old man replied, "You are a transformed being, it is true, but you have a woman's body. As long as I am alive, you may, if you choose, remain unmarried, but one day you will be left alone. These gentlemen have been coming here faithfully for months and even years. Listen carefully to what they have to say, and choose one of them as your husband."

"All I can think is that I should certainly regret it if, in spite of my unattractive looks, I married a man without being sure of the depth of his feelings, and he later proved fickle. No matter how distinguished a man he may be, I wouldn't be willing to marry him unless I were sure he was sincere," said Kaguya-hime.

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"That's exactly what I myself think," answered the old man. "Now, what must a man's feelings be before you are willing to marry him? All these gentlemen have certainly shown unusual devotion."

Kaguya-hime said, "Shall I tell you the depth of sentiments I require? I am not asking for anything extraordinary. All five men seem to be equally affectionate. How can I tell which of them is the most deserving? If one of the five will show me some special thing I wish to see, I will know his affections are the noblest, and I shall become his wife. Please tell this to the gentlemen if they come again."

"An excellent solution," the old man said approvingly.

Toward sunset the suitors gathered as usual. One played a flute, another sang a song, the third sang from score, and the others whistled and beat time with their fans. The old man appeared while this concert was still in progress. He said, "Your visits during all these months and years have done my humble house too great an honor. I am quite overwhelmed. I have told Kaguya-hime that my life is now so uncertain I do not know whether today or tomorrow may not be my last day, and I have suggested to her that she consider carefully and choose one of you gentlemen as her husband. She insists, however, on being sure of the depth of your feelings, and that is only proper. She says she will marry whichever of you proves his superiority by showing her some special thing she wishes to see. This is a fine plan, for none of you will then resent her choice." The five men all agreed that it was indeed an excellent suggestion, and the old man went back into the house to report what had happened.

Kaguya-hime declared, "I should like Prince Ishizukuri to obtain for me from India the stone begging-bowl of the Buddha. Prince Kuramochi is to go to the mountain in the Eastern Sea called Horai and fetch me a branch of the tree that grows there, with roots of silver and trunk of gold, whose fruits are pearls. The next gentleman is to bring me a robe made of the fur of Chinese fire-rats. I ask Otomo, the major counselor, please to fetch me the jewel that shines five colors, found in a dragon's neck. And Isokami, the middle counselor, should present me with a swallow's easy-delivery charm."

The old man said, "These are indeed difficult tasks. The gifts you ask for are not to be found anywhere in Japan. How shall I break the news of such difficult assignments?"

"What is so difficult about them?" asked Kaguya-hime.

"I'll tell them, at any rate," said the old man and went outside. When he had related what was expected of them, the princes and nobles exclaimed, "Why doesn't she simply say, 'Stay away from my house!'?" They all left in disgust.

The Stone Begging-Bowl of the Buddha

Nevertheless, Prince Ishizukuri felt as though his life would not be worth living unless he married the girl, and he reflected, "Is there anything I would not do for her, even if it meant traveling to India to find what she wants?" He realized,

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however, being a prudent man, how unlikely he was to find the one and only begging-bowl, even if he journeyed all eight thousand leagues to India. He left word with Kaguya-hime that he was departing that day for India in search of the begging-bowl and remained away for three years. At a mountain temple in Tochi district of the province of Yamato he obtained a bowl that had stood before the image of Binzuru and was pitch-black with soot. He put the bowl in a brocade bag, fastened it to a spray of artificial flowers, and carried it to Kaguya-hime's house. When he presented the bowl, she looked it over suspiciously. Inside she found a note and opened it: "I have worn out my spirits on the roads over sea and mountains; in quest of the stone bowl my tears of blood have flowed."

Kaguya-hime examined the bowl to see if it gave off a light, but there was not so much as a firefly's glimmer. She returned the bowl with the verse, "I hoped that at least the sparkle of the fallen dew would linger within—why did you fetch this bowl from the Mountain of Darkness?"

The Prince threw away the bowl at the gate and replied with this verse, "When it encountered the Mountain of Brightness it lost its light perhaps; I discard the bowl, but shamelessly cling to my hopes." He sent this into the house, but Kaguya-hime no longer deigned to answer. When he discovered she would not even listen to his pleas, he departed, at a loss for words. Because he persisted in his suit even after throwing away the bowl, people have ever since spoken of surprise at a shameless action as being bowled over.

Prince Kuramochi and Ōtomo, the major counselor, are equally unsuccessful in obtaining the treasures assigned to them.

The Easy-Delivery Charm of the Swallows

The middle counselor Isonokami no Marotari gave orders to the men in his employ to report if any swallows were building nests. "Yes, sir," they said. "But why do you need this information?" He answered, "I intend to get the easy-delivery charm that a swallow carries."

The men said variously, "I've killed many swallows in my time, but I've never seen anything of that description in a swallow's belly." "How do you suppose a swallow manages to pull out the charm just when it's about to give birth?" "It keeps the charm hidden, and if any man gets a glimpse of it, it disappears."

Still another man said, "Swallows are building nests in all the holes along the eaves of the Palace Kitchen. If you send some dependable men there and set up perches from which they can observe the swallows, there are so many swallows that one of them is sure to be giving birth. That will give your men the chance to grab the charm."

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The middle counselor was delighted. "How perfectly extraordinary!" he said, "I had never noticed! Thank you for a most promising suggestion." He ordered twenty dependable men to the spot, and stationed them on lookout perches built for their task. From his mansion he sent a steady stream of messengers asking if the men had successfully obtained the easy-delivery charm.

The swallows, terrified by all the people climbing up to the roof, did not return to their nests. When the middle counselor learned of this, he was at a loss what to do now. Just at this point an old man named Kuratsumaro who worked in the Palace Kitchen was heard to remark, "I have a plan for His Excellency if he wishes to get a swallow's easy-delivery charm." He was at once ushered into the presence of the middle counselor and seated directly before him.

Kuratsumaro said, "You are using clumsy methods to get the charm, and you'll never succeed in that way. The twenty men on their lookout perches are making such a racket that the swallows are much too frightened to come close. You should tear down the perches and dismiss all the men. One man only, a dependable man, should be kept in readiness inside an open-work basket that has a rope attached to it. As soon as a swallow starts to lay an egg, the man in the basket should be hoisted up with the rope. Then he can quickly grab the charm. That is your best plan."

"An excellent plan indeed," said the middle counselor. The perches were dismantled and the men all returned to the palace. The counselor asked Kuratsumaro, "How will we know when the swallow is about to give birth, so the man can be hoisted up in time?"

Kuratsumaro answered, "When a swallow is about to give birth it raises its tail and circles around seven times. As it is completing its seventh turn you should hoist the basket immediately and the man can snatch the charm."

The counselor was overjoyed to hear Kuratsumaro's words. "How wonderful to have my prayers granted!" he exclaimed. "And to think you're not even in my service!" He removed his cloak and offered it to the old man. "Come tonight to the Palace Kitchen," he said, dismissing him.

When it grew dark the middle counselor went to the Kitchen. He observed that swallows were indeed building nests and circling the place with lifted tails, exactly as Kuratsumaro had described. A man was put in a basket and hoisted up, but when he put his hand into the swallow's nest he called down, "There's nothing here!"

"That's because you aren't searching in the proper way!" the counselor angrily retorted. "Is there nobody competent here? I'll have to go up there myself." He climbed into the basket and was hoisted up. He peered into a nest and saw a swallow with its tail lifted circling about furiously. He at once stretched out his arm and felt in the nest. His fingers touched something flat. "I've got it! Lower me now; I've done it myself!" he cried. His men gathered round, but in their eagerness to lower him quickly they pulled too hard, and the rope snapped.

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The middle counselor plunged down, landing on his back atop a kitchen cauldron.

His men rushed to him in consternation and lifted him in their arms. He lay motionless, showing the whites of his eyes. The men drew some water and got him to swallow a little. At length he regained consciousness, and they lowered him by the hands and feet from the top of the cauldron. When they at last felt they could ask him how he was, he answered in a faint voice, "My head seems a little clearer, but I can't move my legs. But I am happy anyway that I managed to get the easy-delivery charm. Light a torch and bring it here. I want to see what the charm looks like." He raised his head and opened his hand only to discover he was clenching some old droppings the swallows had left. "Alas," he cried, "it was all to no avail!" Ever since that time people have said a project that goes contrary to expectations "lacks charm."

When the middle counselor realized he had failed to obtain the charm, his spirits took a decided turn for the worse. His men laid him inside the lid of a Chinese chest and carried him home. He could not be placed inside his carriage because his back had been broken.

The middle counselor attempted to keep people from learning he had been injured because of a childish escapade. Under the strain of this worry he became all the weaker. It bothered him more that people might hear of his fiasco and mock him than that he had failed to secure the charm. His anxiety grew worse each day, until he felt in the end it would be preferable to die of illness in a normal manner than lose his reputation.

Kaguya-hime, hearing of his unfortunate condition, sent a poem of inquiry: "The years pass, but the waves do not return to the pines of Suminoe, where I wait in vain; you have failed to find the charm, I am told, is it true?"

He asked that her poem be read to him. Then he lifted his head very feebly, barely able to write in great pain while someone else held the paper: "My efforts were in vain, and now I am about to die in despair; but will you not save my life?" With these words he expired. Kaguya-hime was rather touched.

From this time something slightly pleasurable has been said to have a modicum of charm.

The Imperial Hunt

The emperor, learning of Kaguya-hime's unrivaled beauty, said to a maid of honor, Nakatomi no Fusako by name, "Please go and discover for me what kind of woman Kaguya-hime is, this beauty who has brought so many men to ruin and refuses to marry."

Fusako, obedient to his command, departed. When she arrived at the Bamboo Cutter's house the old woman deferentially showed her in. The maid of honor said, "I have been ordered by His Majesty to ascertain whether Kaguya-hime is as beautiful as people say. That is why I am here now."

เนื้อหาคุ้มครองลิขสิทธิ์

"I shall tell her," said the old woman and went inside. "Please," she urged Kaguya-hime, "Hurry out and meet the emperor's messenger."

Kaguya-hime replied, "How can I appear before her when I am not in the least attractive?"

"Don't talk nonsense! Do you dare to show such disrespect to someone sent here by the emperor?"

"It doesn't make me feel especially grateful to think the emperor might wish to summon me," answered Kaguya-hime. She showed no sign of relenting and meeting the lady. The old woman had always considered Kaguya-hime as being no different from a child she had borne herself, but when the girl spoke so coldly, it much embarrassed her, and she could not reprimand Kaguya-hime as she would have liked.

The old woman returned to the maid of honor and said, "I must apologize, but the girl is terribly obstinate and refuses to see you."

The maid of honor said, "I was ordered by His Majesty to verify her appearance without fail. How can I return to the palace without seeing her? Do you think it proper for anyone living in this country to be allowed to disobey a royal command? Please do not let her act so unreasonably!" She intended these words to shame Kaguya-hime, but when the latter was informed, she refused all the more vehemently to comply. "If I am disobeying a royal command, let them execute me without delay," she declared.

The maid of honor returned to the palace and reported what had happened. The emperor listened and said merely, "You can see she's quite capable of causing the deaths of a great many men." He seemed to have given up all thought of summoning Kaguya-hime into his service, but he still had his heart set on her, and refused to accept defeat at her hands. He sent for the old man and stated, "I want this Kaguya-hime you have at your place. Word has reached me of the beauty of her face and figure, and I sent my messenger to look her over, but she returned unsuccessful, unable to obtain so much as a glimpse of the girl. Did you bring her up to be so disrespectful?"

The old man humbly replied, "The girl absolutely refuses to serve at court. I am quite at a loss what to do about her. But I'll go back home and report Your Majesty's command."

The emperor asked, "Why should a child you have raised with your own hands refuse to do what you wish? If you present the girl for service here, you can be quite sure I will reward you with court rank."

The old man returned home, overjoyed. He related this conversation to Kaguya-hime, concluding, "That was what the emperor told me. Are you still unwilling to serve him?"

Kaguya-hime answered, "I absolutely refuse to serve at the court. If you force me, I'll simply disappear. It may win you a court rank, but it will mean my death."

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"Never do such a dreadful thing!" cried the old man. "What use would position or rank be to me if I couldn't behold my child? But why are you so reluctant to serve at the court? Would it really kill you?"

"If you still think I am lying, send me into service at the court and see if I don't die. Many men have showed me most unusual affection, but all of them in vain. If I obey the emperor's wishes, no sooner than he expresses them, I shall feel ashamed how people will consider my coldness to those other men."

The old man replied, "I don't care about anyone else. The only thing that disturbs me is the danger to your life. I'll report that you are still unwilling to serve." He went to the palace and informed the emperor, "In humble obedience to Your Majesty's command, I attempted to persuade the child to enter your service, but she told me that if I forced her to serve in the palace, it would surely cause her death. This child was not born of my body. I found her long ago in the mountains. That is why her ways are not like those of ordinary people."

The emperor commented, "She must be a transformed being. There's no hope, then, of having her serve me, but at least I should like somehow to get a glimpse of her."

"I wonder how this could be arranged," said the old man.

The emperor said, "I understand, Miyakkomaro, your house is near the mountains. How would it be if, under pretext of staging an imperial hunt, I stopped by for a look at her?"

"That is an excellent plan," said the old man. "If Your Majesty should happen to call at a time when she does not expect a visitor, you can probably see her." The emperor at once set a date for the hunt.

During the course of the hunt the emperor entered Kaguya-hime's house and saw there a woman so lovely she shed a radiance around her. He thought, this must be Kaguya-hime, and approached. She fled into the adjoining room, but the emperor caught her by the sleeve. She covered her face, but his first glimpse was enough to convince him that she was a peerless beauty. "I won't let you go!" he cried. But when he attempted to take her away with him, Kaguya-hime declared, "If I had been born on earth I would have served you. But if you try to force me to go with you, you will find you cannot."

The emperor said, "Why can't I? I'll take you with me!" He summoned his palanquin, but at that instant Kaguya-hime suddenly dissolved into a shadow. The emperor realized to his dismay and disappointment that she was indeed no ordinary mortal. He said, "I shall not insist any longer that you come with me. But please return to your former shape. Just one look at you and I shall go." Kaguya-hime resumed her original appearance.

The emperor was still too entranced with Kaguya-hime's beauty to stifle his feelings, and he displayed his pleasure with the old man for having brought about the meeting. Miyakkomaro, for his part, tendered a splendid banquet for the emperor's officers. The emperor was bitterly disappointed to return to the

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palace without Kaguya-hime, and as he left the Bamboo Cutter's house he felt as though his soul remained behind. After he had entered his palanquin he sent this verse to Kaguya-hime: "As I go back to the palace my spirits lag; I turn back, I hesitate, because of Kaguya-hime, who defies me and remains behind."

To this she wrote in reply, "How could one who has lived her life in a house overgrown with weeds dare to look upon a jeweled palace?"

The emperor felt there was less reason than ever to leave when he saw this poem, but since he could not spend the night with Kaguya-hime, he had no choice but to return. When he saw again the palace ladies who usually waited on him they seemed unworthy even to appear in Kaguya-hime's presence. Indeed, the very ladies he had always considered more beautiful than other women, when compared to Kaguya-hime seemed scarcely worthy of the name of human beings. He ceased visiting his consorts, finding no pleasure in their company. He wrote letters only to Kaguya-hime, and her answers were by no means unkind. He used also to send her poems attached to flowers or branches that struck him as especially attractive.

The Celestial Robe of Feathers

They passed some three years in this way, each consoling the other. At the beginning of the next spring Kaguya-hime seemed more pensive than usual as she watched the moon rise in all its splendor. Someone nearby admonished her, "People should avoid staring the moon in the face." But when no one was around, Kaguya-hime would often gaze at the moon and weep bitterly. At the time of the full moon of the Seventh Month she sat outside, seemingly lost in thought. Her maidservants informed the Bamboo Cutter: "Kaguya-hime has always looked with deep emotion at the moon, but she has seemed rather strange of late. She must be terribly upset over something. Please keep an eye on her."

The old man asked Kaguya-hime, "What makes you look so pensively at the moon?"

She answered, "When I look at the moon the world seems lonely and sad. What else would there be to worry me?"

He went over to Kaguya-hime and looked at her face. She definitely appeared melancholy. He asked, "My dear one, what are you thinking of? What worries you?"

"I am not worried about anything. But everything seems so depressing."

"You shouldn't look at the moon," the old man said. "Whenever you do, you always seem so upset."

"How could I go on living if I didn't look at the moon?" Each night, as the moon rose, she would sit outside, immersed in thought. On dark moonless nights she seemed to emerge from her reverie, but with the reappearance of the moon she would sometimes sigh and weep. Her maids whispered to one

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another, "There really does seem to be something disturbing her," but no one, not even her parents, knew what it was.

One moonlit night toward the middle of the Eighth Month Kaguya-hime, sitting outside, suddenly burst into a flood of tears. She now wept without caring whether or not people saw. Her parents, noticing this, asked in alarm what was troubling her. Kaguya-hime answered, still weeping, "I have intended to tell you for a long time, but I was so sure I would make you unhappy that I have kept silent all this while. But I can be silent no more. I will tell you everything. I am not a creature of this world. I came from the Palace of the Moon to this world because of an obligation incurred in a former life. Now the time has come when I must return. On the night of the full moon people from my old country will come for me, and I will have no choice but to go. I was heartbroken to think how unhappy this news would make you, and that is why I have been grieving ever since this spring." She wept copiously.

The old man cried, "What's that you say? I found you in a stick of bamboo when you were no bigger than a poppy seed, and I have brought you up until now you stand as tall as I. Who is going to take my child away? Do you think I'll let them?" He added, "If they do, it will kill me." His distraught weeping was really unbearable to behold.

Kaguya-hime said, "I have a father and mother who live in the City of the Moon. When I came here from my country I said it would be just for a short while, but already I have spent many years in this land. I have tarried among you, without thinking of my parents on the moon, and I have become accustomed to your ways. Now that I am about to return I feel no great joy, but only a terrible sadness. And yet though it is not by my choice, I must go." They both wept uncontrollably. Her maids, who had been in her service for years, thought how unspeakable parting would be, and how much they would miss her noble and lively disposition, to which they had grown so familiar. They refused all nourishment and grieved no less than the others.

When the emperor learned what had occurred, he sent a messenger to the Bamboo Cutter's house. The old man went out to receive him, weeping profusely. His beard had turned white from sorrow, his back was bent, and his eyes were swollen. He was just fifty this year, but his troubles seemed to have aged him suddenly. The imperial messenger transmitted the emperor's words: "I am informed that you have been afflicted by a grave misfortune—is it true?"

The Bamboo Cutter, weeping, answered the message, "On the night of the full moon men are coming from the City of the Moon to fetch Kaguya-hime. I am deeply honored by His Majesty's kind enquiry, and beg him to send soldiers here on that night, to catch anyone who may arrive from the moon."

The messenger departed and, after reporting to the emperor on the old man's condition, repeated his request. The emperor said, "If I, who had but a single glimpse of Kaguya-hime, cannot put her from my thoughts, what must it be like for her parents, who are used to seeing her day and night, to lose her?"

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On the fifteenth, the day of the full moon, the emperor issued orders to the different guards headquarters, and, designating as his official envoy the junior commandant of the Palace Guards, Takano no Okuni, sent a force of some two thousand men from the Six Headquarters to the Bamboo Cutter's house. No sooner did they arrive than a thousand men posted themselves on the wall and a thousand on the roof. Together with the numerous members of the household they formed a defense that left no openings. The defenders were equipped with bows and arrows, and inside the main house the womenfolk were stationed, guarding it.

The old woman sat in the strong-room of the house, holding Kaguya-hime in her arms. The old man, having tightly barred the door, stood on guard at the entrance. He declared, "Do you think anybody, even if he comes from the moon, is going to break through our defenses?" He called to the roof, "Shoot to kill if you see anything flying in the sky, no matter how small!"

The guards answered, "With defenses as strong as ours we're sure we can shoot down even a mosquito. We'll expose its body as a warning to the others." Their words greatly reassured the old man.

Kaguya-hime said, "No matter how you lock me up and try to guard me, you won't be able to resist the men from the moon. You won't be able to use your weapons on them. Even if you shut me up in this room, when they come everything will open before them. Resist them though you may, when they come even the bravest man will lose heart."

"If anyone comes after you, I'll tear out his eyes with my long nails," cried the old man. "I'll grab him by the hair and throw him to ground. I'll put him to shame by exposing his behind for all the officers to see!" He shouted with anger.

"Don't talk in such a loud voice," cautioned Kaguya-hime. "It would be shocking if the men on the roof heard you. I am very sorry to leave you without ever having expressed my gratitude for all your kindnesses. It makes me sad to think that fate did not permit us to remain together for long, and I must soon depart. Surely you know it will not be easy for me to leave without ever having shown in the least my devotion to you, my parents. When I have gone outside and have sat looking at the moon I have always begged for just one more year with you, but my wish was refused. That was what made me so unhappy. It breaks my heart to leave you after bringing you such grief. The people of the moon are extremely beautiful, and they never grow old. Nor have they any worries. Yet, I am not at all happy to be returning. I know I shall miss you and keep wishing I could be looking after you when you are old and helpless." She spoke in tears.

"Don't talk of such heartrending things!" the old man exclaimed. "No matter how beautiful those people may be, I won't let them stand in my way." His tone was bitter.

By now the evening had passed. About midnight the area of the house was suddenly illuminated by a light more dazzling than that of high noon, a light

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as brilliant as ten full moons put together, so bright one could see the pores of a man's skin. Then down from the heavens men came riding on clouds, and arrayed themselves at a height some five feet above the ground. The guards inside and outside the house, seemingly victims of some supernatural spell, quite lost their will to resist. At length they plucked up their courage and tried to ready their bows and arrows, but the strength had gone from their hands, and their bodies were limp. Some valiant men among them, with a great effort, tried to shoot their bows, but the arrows glanced off harmlessly in all directions. Unable to fight boldly, like soldiers, they could only watch, stupefied.

Words cannot describe the beauty of the raiment worn by the men who hovered in the air. With them they had brought a flying chariot covered by a parasol of gauzy silk. One among them, apparently their king, called out, "Miyakkomaro, come here!" The old man, who had assumed such an air of defiance, prostrated himself before the stranger, feeling as if he were in a drunken stupor. The king said, "You childish old man! We sent the young lady down into the world for a short while, in return for some trifling good deeds you had performed, and for many years we have bestowed riches on you, until you are now like a different man. Kaguya-hime was obliged to live for a time in such humble surroundings because of a sin she had committed in the past. The term of her punishment is over, and we have come, as you can see, to escort her home. No matter how you weep and wail, old man, you cannot detain her. Send her forth at once!"

"I have been watching over Kaguya-hime for more than twenty years," the old man answered. "You speak of her having come down into this world for 'a short while.' It makes me wonder if you are not talking about some other Kaguya-hime living in a different place." He added, "Besides, the Kaguya-hime I have here is suffering from a serious illness and cannot leave her room."

No answer met his words. Instead, the king guided the flying chariot to the roof, where he called out, "Kaguya-hime! Why have you lingered such a long time in this filthy place?" The door of the strong room flew open, and the lattice-work shutters opened of their own accord. The old woman had been clutching Kaguya-hime in her arms, but now the girl freed herself and stepped outside. The old woman, unable to restrain her, could only look up to heaven and weep.

Kaguya-hime approached the Bamboo Cutter, who lay prostrate, weeping in his bewilderment. "It is not by my own inclination that I leave you now," she said. "Please at least watch as I ascend into the sky."

"How can I watch you go when it makes me so sad? You are abandoning me to go up to Heaven, not caring what may happen to me. Take me with you!" He threw himself down, weeping.

Kaguya-hime was at a loss what to do. She said, "Before I go I shall write a letter for you. If ever you long for me, take out the letter and read it." In tears

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she wrote these words: "Had I but been born in this world I should have stayed with you and never caused you any grief. To leave this world and part from you is quite contrary to my wishes. Please think of this cloak, that I leave with you, as a memento of me. On nights when the moon shines in the sky, gaze at it well. Now that I am about to forsake you, I feel as though I must fall from the sky, pulled back to this world by my longing for you."

Some of the celestial beings had brought boxes with them. One contained a robe of feathers, another the elixir of immortality. "Please take some of the elixir in this jar," said a celestial being to Kaguya-hime. "You must be feeling unwell after the things you have had to eat in this dirty place." He offered her the elixir and Kaguya-hime tasted a little. Then, thinking she might leave a little as a remembrance of herself, she started to wrap some of the elixir in the cloak she had discarded, when a celestial being prevented her. He took the robe of feathers from its box and attempted to throw it over her shoulders, but Kaguya-hime cried out. "Wait just a moment! They say that once you put on this robe your heart changes, and there are still a few words I must say." She wrote another letter.

The celestial beings called impatiently, "It's late!"

"Don't talk so unreasonably!" exclaimed Kaguya-hime. With perfect serenity she gave the letter to someone for delivery to the emperor. She showed no signs of agitation. The letter said: "Although you graciously deigned to send many people to detain me here, my escorts have come and will not be denied. Now they will take me with them, to my bitter regret and sorrow. I am sure you must find it quite incomprehensible, but it weighs heaviest on my heart that you may consider my stubborn refusal to obey your commands an act of disrespect." To the above she added the verse: "Now that the moment has come to put on the robe of feathers, how longingly I recall my lord!" Kaguya-hime attached to the letter some elixir of immortality from the jar and, summoning the commander of the guards, directed him to offer it to the emperor. A celestial being took the gift from her hands and passed it to the commander. No sooner had the commander accepted the elixir than the celestial being put the robe of feathers on Kaguya-hime. At once she lost all recollection of the pity and grief she had felt for the old man. No cares afflict anyone who once puts on this robe, and Kaguya-hime, in all tranquillity, climbed into her chariot and ascended into the sky, accompanied by a retinue of a hundred celestial beings.

The old man and woman shed bitter tears, but to no avail. When her letter was read to them, they cried, "Why should we cling to our lives? For whose sake? All is useless now." They refused to take medicine, and never left their sick-beds again.

The commander returned to the palace with his men. He reported in detail the reasons why he and his men had failed with their weapons to prevent Kaguya-hime from departing. He also presented the jar of elixir with the letter

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attached. The emperor felt much distressed when he opened the letter and read Kaguya-hime's words. He refused all nourishment, and permitted no entertainments in his presence.

Later, the emperor summoned his ministers and great nobles and asked them which mountain was closest to Heaven. One man replied, "The mountain in the province of Suruga. It is near both to the capital and to Heaven." The emperor thereupon wrote the poem: "What use is it, this elixir of immortality, to one who floats in tears because he cannot meet her again?"

He gave the poem and the jar containing the elixir to a messenger with the command that he take them to the summit of the mountain in Suruga. He directed that the letter and the jar be placed side by side, set on fire, and allowed to be consumed in the flames. The men, obeying this command, climbed the mountain, taking with them a great many soldiers. Ever since they burned the elixir of immortality on the summit, people have called the mountain by the name Fuji, meaning immortal. Even now the smoke is still said to rise into the clouds.

[Translated by Donald Keene]

THE TALES OF ISE (*ISE MONOGATARI*, CA. 947)

In its most familiar versions, *The Tales of Ise* (*Ise monogatari*) is a collection of 125 *uta-gatari* (or *uta-monogatari*, literally, "poem tale") presented as episodes in the life of Ariwara no Narihira (825–880), a nobleman celebrated as the greatest male poet of his age. Within a decade or so of his death, Narihira had become the legendary hero of early Heian court society, idealized for sacrificing political favor, fortune, and propriety for love and poetry. The legend of Narihira flourished for centuries and ensured *The Tales of Ise* a place—equaled only by the *Kokinshū*, *The Tale of Genji*, and *One Hundred Poets, One Hundred Poems* (*Hyakkunin-isshu*)—among the most widely read and quoted classics of Japanese literature.

Classical Japanese poetry often was anthologized, either in large collections of works by many poets, like the *Man'yōshū* or the *Kokinshū* or, usually, in smaller personal collections of works by a single poet. These personal collections in turn gave rise to a variety of genres: (1) poetic travel diaries like the *Tosa Diary* by Ki no Tsurayuki; (2) confessional, semiautobiographical poetic diaries by women like the *Kagerō Diary* by Mother of Michitsuna and the *Sarashina Diary* by Daughter of Takasue; and (3) collections of poem tales focused on the life or work of a particular poet, the most famous example of which is *The Tales of Ise*. Its earliest versions are based on the poetry of Narihira, the implicit protagonist of *The Tales of Ise*. Because classical poems (waka) were short and often social in nature, they invited questions of when, where, and for whom or for what purposes they were composed. One consequence was the

Telif hakkı olan materyal

creation of stories about the poems. The combination of Narihira's skill as a poet—he is known for his extensive use of parallelism and rhythm—and his fame as a lover made him the object of many poetic legends. Other poem tales appearing around this time were *The Tales of Yamato* (*Yamato monogatari*, ca. 951) and *The Tales of Heichū* (*Heichū monogatari*, ca. 965).

The original core of *The Tales of Ise* was most likely an early version of Narihira's personal collection of waka. Later editors expanded it by adding poems from the *Kokinshū* ascribed to Narihira, many with long headnotes (*kotobagaki*). Later additions to *The Tales of Ise* included anonymous poems from the *Kokinshū* and the *Gosenshū* (951) attributed to the protagonist. (Fewer than one-quarter of the more than two hundred poems in the 125-section texts of *The Tales of Ise* are believed to have been written by Narihira himself.)

The prose, which has been reduced to the bare essentials, typically supplies a fictionalized historical context or dramatic circumstances, and the poetry reveals the thoughts and emotions of the characters and brings the narrative to a climax, a sophisticated narrative technique that foreshadows *The Tale of Genji*.

Even though each of the 125 sections of *The Tales of Ise* is essentially autonomous, they are arranged in a partially biographical sequence, beginning with the protagonist's youth (sec. 1) and progressing from his transgressions in the capital (sec. 4), his exile to the east (sec. 9), his return to the capital, and, finally, his death (sec. 125). Significantly, Narihira violates social convention, engaging in forbidden love in unexpected places and violating the prerogatives of the throne (sec. 65) or subtly mocking the fortunes of the dominant Fujiwara lineage (sec. 101). The inevitable consequences for himself and his lovers become the impetus for poetry of profound feeling and resignation to separation, disappointment, and sorrow, composed with an elegance of diction and rhetorical subtlety that seem to overcome every form of loss or defeat.

Among other things, *The Tales of Ise* demonstrated the proper protocols and occasions for the social uses of poetry, a necessary part of an aristocrat's education and social training, and became a familiar source for poetic diction, themes, and allusive variation. By the late Heian period, it had become one of the three most influential texts in the kana tradition (along with the *Kokinshū* and *The Tale of Genji*), and it served as a handbook for waka poets throughout the rest of the medieval period. *The Tales of Ise* also provided literary topoi and precedents for later writers—including Murasaki Shikibu, whose hero Genji shares many of the features of the fictionalized Narihira—as well as for painters and dramatists. The noted nō play *Sumida River*, included in this anthology, is based on "Journey to the Eastern Provinces" (sec. 7, 8, 9, and after) in *The Tales of Ise*. After being canonized by Fujiwara no Teika and other poets in the thirteenth century, *The Tales of Ise* became the object of extensive commentary and, in certain early strains of this tradition, was either read as history (biography of Narihira) or allegorized as an esoteric religious text.

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Coming of Age (1)

In the past, a boy donned the cap of manhood[122] and went to hunt in the village of Kasuga near the old capital of Nara, where his family owned estates. In that village lived two very charming girls, sisters. The man peered in at them. Surprised to have found them in such unbecoming circumstances in the old capital, his feelings were in turmoil. The man cut off the hem of the hunting robe he was wearing, wrote a poem on it, and sent it in to them. He was wearing a hunting robe with a print of tangled hare's-foot ferns.[123]

Kasugano no	Like a patterned robe
wakamurasaki no	dyed with young lavender
surigoromo	from the fields of Kasuga,
shinobu no midare	my tangled feelings
kagiri shirarezu	know no bounds.[124]

He wrote this rapidly, in a single line.[125] He must have been very pleased with himself. The poem is of the same tenor as the following:

Michinoku no	Whose fault is it
shinobu mojizuri	that my feelings are tangled
tare yue ni	as the dyed patterns
midare somenishi	on cloth from Michinoku?
ware naranaku ni	Surely not mine. . . .[126]

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122. That is, he underwent the capping and coming-of-age ceremony, in which a youth's hair was cut and he put on adult clothes and a hat for the first time. In this case the cap would have indicated the man's rank in the court hierarchy.

123. The man's robe is made of cloth on which these ferns had been rubbed, producing a tangled pattern. This cloth was manufactured in the district of Shinobu in Michinoku Province, in the far northern part of Japan.

124. *Wakamurasaki* is literally "young gromwell," a plant whose roots were used to make purple dye. In classical Japanese poetry, the color purple suggests affinity; here it represents the sisters. The word *shinobu*, which means "yearning," is a pun referring also to the province in which the cloth was made.

125. The phrase here is ambiguous and may have meant "he wrote with a sophistication belying his youth." Writing "in a single line" would mean that in his eagerness to set the poem down, he did not take time to arrange the graphemes for artistic effect.

126. This second poem is by Minamoto no Tōru (822–895) and appears in the *Kokinshū* (no. 724). Since Tōru was only three years older than Narihira, commentators question whether the poem would have existed and been accessible for Narihira to allude to at the time of his coming-of-age ceremony (the precise date of which is not known), suggesting that the section was created or extended by a later writer. There is much evidence of later revisions and additions to an early version of the text and little evidence that Narihira had a direct role in composing more than a core of poems with headnotes.

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In the past, people were given to this kind of impetuous elegance.[127]

The Western Capital (2)

In the past there was a man. At a time when the capital in Nara had been left behind, yet before people had quite settled into the current capital, there was a woman living in the western part of the city.[128] This woman was superior to other people, and her mind surpassed even her appearance. It seemed she was not without lovers. An earnest man, he pledged his love to her and returned home. What might he have been thinking? It was the last day of the Third Month,[129] and he sent this to her as rain fell softly.

oki mo sezu	I spent the night
ne mo sede yoru o	neither awake
akashite wa	nor yet asleep
haru no mono to te	and the day gazing at the rain
nagamekurashitsu	thinking of spring.[130]

The West Wing (4)

In the past there was a woman living in the west wing of the grand empress's[131] mansion in the east Fifth Ward. A man who, without so intending, harbored deep feelings for her, went to visit. But around the tenth of the First Month she disappeared. He heard where she was, but since it was not a place where one could go,[132] he grew ever more melancholy. In the First Month of the following year, when the plum blossoms were at their height, he longed for the previous year and went back to the west wing. He stood and looked, he sat and looked. He looked but could find nothing that recalled the year before. Weeping bitterly, he lay down on the rough floor boards until the moon sank, and remembering the year before he composed this:

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127. The word translated as "elegance," *miyabi*, refers to an urbane sophistication associated with the capital and the aristocracy. Although the word appears only this one time in the text, many modern commentators argue that it is a major theme of *The Tales of Ise*.

128. The new capital was established in present-day Kyoto in 794.

129. This was the last day of spring by the lunar calendar.

130. Ariwara no Narihira, *Kokinshū*, no. 616. The word *nagame* means both "long rains" and "gazing in melancholy."

131. Traditionally identified as Fujiwara no Junshi, who was the aunt of Fujiwara no Takaiko, later the empress of the Second Ward. Referring to Junshi here suggests that the woman in the west wing is Takaiko.

132. The most likely suggestion is that this place is the imperial court and that the woman had become a consort to the emperor; an alternative suggestion is that she was taken into the home of an older male relative to isolate her from the man.

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tsuki ya aranu	Is there no moon?
haru ya mukashi no	Is the spring
haru naranu	not the spring of the past?
wagami hitotsu wa	I alone
moto no mi ni shite	am as I was. . . .[133]

With the first faint glow of dawn, he went home, still weeping.

Journey to the Eastern Provinces (9)

In the past there was a man. Having made up his mind that his position was worthless, he thought that he should live in the east rather than in the capital, and he set out to find a province where he could reside. He went with an old friend or two. Since none of them knew the way, they wandered about. They arrived at a place called Eight Bridges in Mikawa Province. The place is called Eight Bridges because the rivers in which the water flows branch like a spider's legs and were spanned by eight bridges. They dismounted in the shade of a tree at the edge of the marsh there and ate dried rice. In the marsh, irises [*kakitsubata*] were blooming beautifully. Seeing them, one of the party said, "Compose a poem on the subject of travel, using the five syllables *ka-ki-tsu-ba-ta* to begin each of its five phrases."

karagoromo	Since I have a wife
kitsutsu narenishi	familiar to me as the hem
tsuma shi areba	of a well-worn robe,
harubaru kinuru	I think sadly of how far
tabi o shi zo omou	I have traveled on this journey.[134]

When he composed this, all of them shed tears on their dried rice until it swelled with the moisture.

Moving on, they came to the province of Suruga. When they arrived at Mount Utsu, they were troubled to find that the road they planned to take was very dark and narrow, with dense growth of creepers and maples. As they were thinking what unexpected and difficult experiences they were having, they met

133. Narihira, *Kokinshū*, no. 747.

134. Narihira, *Kokinshū*, no. 410. In addition to meeting the condition proposed by his traveling companion, the poem contains several puns that could not be incorporated in the translation. *Kitsutsu* means both "coming" and "wearing"; *narenishi* is both "accustomed to" and "grown fond of"; *tsuma* is both "wife" and "hem"; *haru* means "to full [cloth]"; and *harubaru* means "far."

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The Eight Bridges in Mikawa Province. (From the Sagabon edition, early seventeenth century)

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with a pilgrim. "What are you doing on such a road as this?" he asked them, and the man recognized him as someone he knew. He wrote a letter and asked the pilgrim to take it to the lady he had left in the capital.

Suruga naru	Near Mount Utsu
Utsu no yamabe ni	in Suruga
utsutsu ni mo	I can meet you
yume ni mo hito ni	neither in reality
awanu narikeri	nor in my dreams.[135]

When they came to Mount Fuji, they saw that it was very white with falling snow even on the last day of the Fifth Month.[136]

toki shiranu	The peak of Mount Fuji
yama wa Fuji no ne	is oblivious to time.
itsu to te ka	What season does it take this to be
ka no ko madara ni	that the falling snow
yuki no fururamu	should dapple it like a fawn?

135. The name Mount Utsu suggests the word for "reality" (*utsutsu*), and the first two lines of the poem are a preface leading to the word. At the time, people believed that someone who was thinking of them would appear in their dreams. The man's failure to meet his beloved even in his dreams implies that the woman is not thinking of him.

136. That is, in summer.

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If we compare this mountain with those here in the capital, it is twenty times the height of Mount Hiei, and its shape is like a cone of sand used for making salt.[137]

Continuing on as before, they came to a very large river between Musashi and Shimotsufusa provinces. It is called the Sumida River. As they stood in a group on the edge of the river and thought of home, lamenting together how very far they had come, the ferryman said, "Hurry up and get in the boat. It's getting dark." About to board the boat and cross the river, they all felt forlorn, for there was not one of them who did not have someone he loved in the capital. Just then they saw a white bird with a red bill and legs, about the size of a snipe, cavorting in the water and eating fish. Since this is not a bird one sees in the capital, none of them recognized it. When they asked the ferryman what it was, he said, "Why, that's a capital bird." Hearing this, the man composed a poem:

na ni shi owaba	If you are true to your name
iza koto towamu	then I shall ask:
miyakodori	O capital bird,
waga omou hito no	is the one I love
ari ya nashi ya to	alive or dead?[138]

Everyone in the boat burst into tears.

The Thief (12)

In the past there was a man. He ran off with someone's daughter and led her to Musashino. Since this made him a thief, he was ordered arrested by the governor of the province. He left the woman in a grassy place and ran away. Some people who came along the road said, "We hear there is a thief in this field," and started to set fire to it. The woman was distressed, and composed the following:

Musashino wa	Do not burn, today,
kyō wa na yaki so	this field of Musashi!
wakakusa no	Fresh as young grass
tsuma mo komoreri	my spouse is hidden here
ware mo komoreri	as I am hiding, too.

When they heard this, they took the woman and led the pair off together.

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137. The meaning of the word *shiojiri*, translated here as "cone of sand," is disputed.
138. The implication is that a "capital bird" should know what is going on in the capital.

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In the Provinces (15)

In the past, in the province of Michinoku, after spending some nights with the wife of someone of no distinction and surprised to find that she was not at all the kind of woman he had expected, a man wrote:

Shinobuyama	I long to find a path
shinobite kayou	to the depths of Mount Shinobu
michi mogana	that I might fathom
hito no kokoro no	the secrets
oku mo miru beku	of another's heart.[139]

The woman thought it a very fine poem but was ashamed to imagine what might be revealed if he could indeed see into the heart of a rustic like herself.

The Well-Curb (23)

In the past, a boy and a girl whose parents made their living traveling in the countryside used to go to the foot of the well to play together, but when they grew up, they became shy around each other. Nonetheless, the boy (now a man) thought he must have this girl, and the girl continued to have tender feelings toward him—although her parents tried to marry her to another, she would not hear of it. One day the following came from the man, who lived next door:

tsutsui tsu no	Since last I saw you
izutsu ni kakeshi	my height
maro ga take	has surpassed
suginikerashi na	that of the well-curb
imo mizaru ma ni	where we measured it.

The girl replied:

kurabekoshi	This parted hair
furiwakegami mo	I once compared with yours

139. Mount Shinobu is a poetic place-name (*utamakura*) punning on the verb *shinobu*, which means "to conceal," "endure," and "long for" (n. 121). The wish to see directly into another's heart is a frequently used motif of waka on the topic of love, reflecting the suspicion that words and appearances may conceal more than they reveal (see *Kokinshū*, no. 797, and n. 36).

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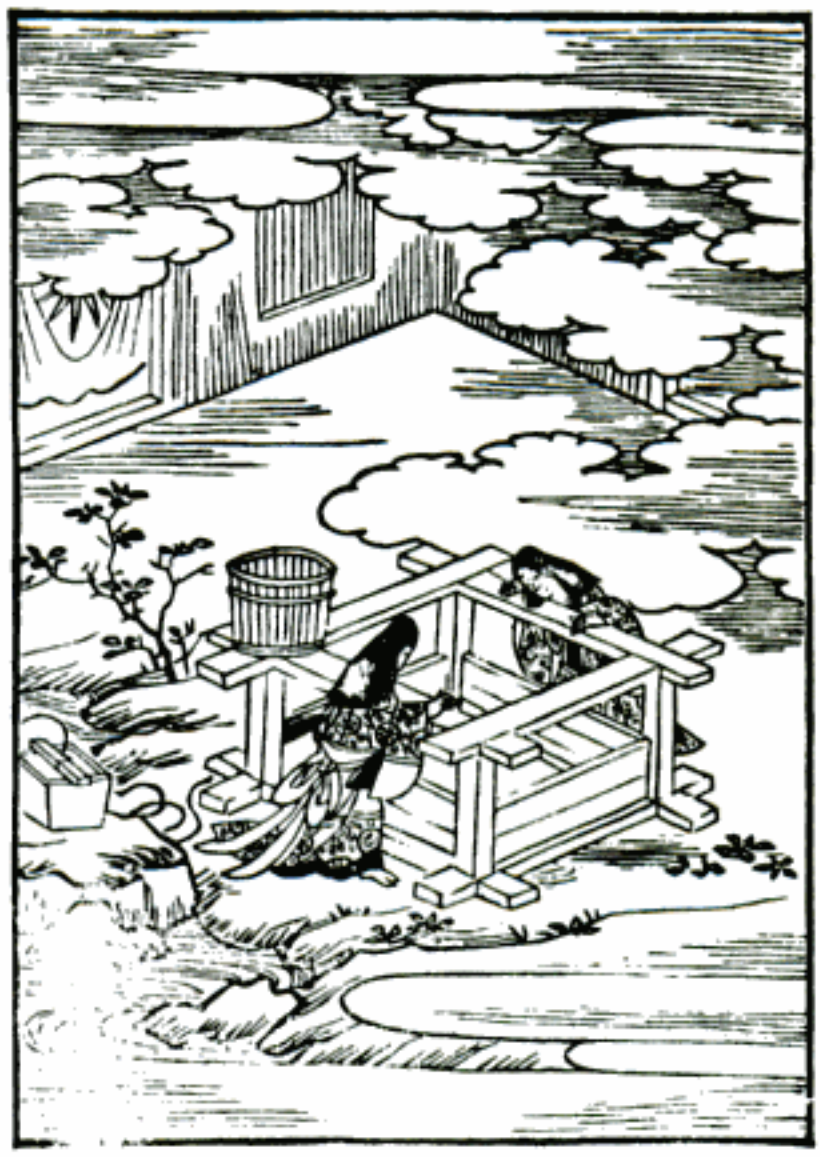

The boy and the girl at the well-curb. (From the Sagabon edition, early seventeenth century)

kata suginu	now falls past my shoulders.
kimi narazu shite	Who should tie it up
tare ka agubeki	if not you?[140]

After many such exchanges, they were finally able to marry as they wished.

Several years passed, and the woman's parents died. Without their support,[141] the man thought there was no use in going on together as they had been and began visiting a woman in Takayasu, in Kōchi Province. Despite this, the first woman saw him off without any sign of distrust, so the man began to suspect that she was seeing someone else. When he hid himself in the shrubbery, pretending to have left for Kōchi, the woman carefully put on her makeup and, gazing off sadly, recited

kaze fukeba	When the wind blows
okitsu shiranami	the white waves break in the offing,
Tatsutayama	will you be crossing

140. Young boys and girls wore their hair parted in the middle; girls tied theirs up when they came of age.

141. The man apparently depended on the woman's parents for financial support, a common custom at the time.

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yowa ni ya kimi ga	Mount Tatsuta
hitori koyuramu	alone at night?[142]

When he heard this, his tenderness for her knew no bounds, and he stopped going to Kōchi.

When he went on rare occasions to look in on the woman in Takayasu, he found that though she had initially made herself out to be refined, she had become careless. When he saw her take up a ladle herself and pile rice into a serving bowl, he was disgusted and stopped going to see her.[143] The woman gazed off into the distance toward Yamato and said:

kimi ga atari	I shall keep watch
mitsutsu o oramu	over you.
Ikomayama	Do not hide Mount Ikoma,
kumo na kakushi so	O clouds,
ame wa furu to mo	even if it rains.[144]

Finally the man from Yamato said he would come. She waited happily, but after being disappointed several times, she said:

kimi komu to	As each night
iishi yo goto ni	you said you would come
suginureba	passes by,
tanomanu mono no	I learn not to trust you
koitsutsu zo furu	though my love persists.

But the man stopped visiting her.

Thinning Hair (63)

In the past, a woman who loved love wondered how she might meet a man of deep feeling. Since she had no way of coming out and saying so, she made up a story about a dream. She called three of her children and told them about it. Two of them made unfeeling responses and

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142. *Tatsu* (break) functions as a pivot word, a pun on the name Mount Tatsuta, and the verbal predicate for *shiranami* (white waves). *Shiranami* also is a euphemism for thieves who preyed on travelers in the desolate mountain pass. The poem expresses the woman's concern for the man's safety and, with it, her constant love for him, despite his infidelity.

143. The suggestion is that a woman of refinement would have had a servant ladle the rice. Some medieval commentaries on *The Tales of Ise* see this passage as an instance of *haikai*, a deliberate break in the otherwise elegant demeanor of the narrative.

144. Mount Ikoma was on the border of Yamato (present-day Nara Prefecture) and Kōchi (now eastern Osaka) Provinces.

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dismissed it. The third son, detecting its import, said, "A good man will surely come to you," and with that the woman looked very pleased.

Since other men are quite without feeling, the son thought he might manage somehow to have her meet the Ariwara middle captain.[145] He ran into the captain when he was out hunting and, taking the bridle of his horse on the road, told him of the situation. The captain was moved by pity and went to sleep with her. Afterward, since he did not appear again, the woman went to his house and peered in at him. The man caught a glimpse of her and said:

momotose ni	One year short
hitotose taranu	of a hundred
tsukumogami	with her thinning hair,
ware o kourashi	I see a vision
omokage ni miyu	of one who seems to love me.

Seeing that he looked as if he were about to leave, she returned home in haste, bumping against brambles and briars, and lay down. As the woman had done, the man stood outside peering in at her secretly. The woman, preparing to sleep, complained in verse:

samushiro ni	On a narrow mat
koromo katashiki	with a single robe for cover,
koyoi mo ya	again tonight
koishiki hito ni	must I lie here alone
awade nomi nemu	without the one I long for?

The man was moved and spent the night with her.

It is a rule of this world that people are considerate of those they love and unfeeling toward those they do not love, but this man had a heart that made no such distinctions.

The Man of the Ariwara Clan (65)

In the past there was a woman whom the emperor loved and had taken into his service and who was allowed to wear the forbidden colors. She had a cousin who was the mother of an emperor. A man of the Ariwara clan who served at court was still very young but was on intimate terms with this woman. Since this man was allowed in the women's quarters, he went to where this woman

145. One of the positions Narihira held at the end of his career. This is as close as the text comes to naming Narihira outright.

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was and refused to budge. When the woman said, "This is most improper. We will come to no good. Stop behaving this way!" the man composed this:

omou ni wa	My caution
shinoburu koto zo	is quite defeated
makenikeru	by my yearning for you:
au ni shi kaeba	if we can but meet,
sa mo araba are	let happen what may!

The woman retreated to her rooms, but since the man went to her as usual, unconcerned that others might see, the woman was distressed and went back to her own home. Finding this not a deterrent but, rather, a convenience, the man began visiting her at home. Everyone heard about this and laughed. When the groundskeepers saw him return to the palace in the mornings, he would take his shoes, throw them in toward the back, and enter.[146]

While he was carrying on in this disgraceful way, it occurred to him that he would lose his position and finally be ruined, so he prayed to the gods and buddhas, saying, "Please put an end to these feelings!" But his love for her only increased, and his yearning was unbearable. He summoned yin-yang diviners and shamanesses, made preparations for a ritual ablution that would end his love, and went out to the river. But after the ritual he grew only more despondent and longed for her even more.

koi seji to	The gods
mitarashigawa ni	have not accepted
seshi misogi	the rites I performed
kami wa ukezu mo	here at the sacred river
narinikeru kana	to end my yearning.

The emperor was a handsome man, and when the woman heard him chanting the Buddha's name with great solemnity in a noble voice, she wept bitterly. "What an unfortunate fate. How sad I am to be unable to serve such a lord, to be shackled to that man!" she said and wept. At this time, the emperor heard of the affair and sent the man into exile. He made the woman go to her cousin, his mother, who chastised her by shutting her up in a storehouse. Confined in the storehouse, she wept.

ama no karu	In the name of the creature
mo ni sumu mushi no	that lives in the seaweed

146. So that they would think that he had not been out all night. The shoes of latecomers would be farther from the door.

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ware kara to	reaped by fisherfolk,
ne o koso nakame	I cry, "It is my fault!"
yo o ba uramiji	and don't blame the world.[147]

When she cried like this, the man, who returned every night from the province to which he had been exiled, played his flute with fervor and sang of his feelings in moving tones. Thus the woman, though shut up in the storehouse, could hear that he was there, but they were unable to meet. She thought:

sari to mo to	How sad that he should still
omou ramu koso	hope we might meet,
kanashikere	not knowing
aru ni mo aranu	I am here
mi o shirazu shite	but not here.

As for the man, since he could not meet her, he wandered about in this way and went back to the provinces, singing this:

itazura ni	I went away
yukite wa kinuru	in vain
mono yue ni	only to return:
mimaku hoshisa ni	my desire to see her
izanawaretsutsu	luring me back again.

This must have been during the reign of Emperor Seiwa. The mother of the emperor was the Somedono empress. Or she might have been the empress of the Fifth Ward.[148]

The Imperial Huntsman (69)

In the past there was a man. When he was dispatched to Ise Province as an imperial huntsman,[149] the mother of the high priestess of the Ise Shrine[150] told her daughter to treat him better than she would the usual messengers. Since

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147. *Ware kara*, which means "due to me" and here, more concretely, "by my own fault," is also the name of a small crustacean that lives in seaweed.

148. Emperor Seiwa's (r. 858–876) mother, Fujiwara no Meishi, was Takaiko's cousin and was known as the Somedono empress. The empress of the Fifth Ward (mentioned earlier) was Takaiko's aunt and also the mother of an emperor (Montoku, Seiwa's brother), hence the ambiguity.

149. "Imperial huntsmen" were sent by the emperor to nearby provinces both to bring back game and to investigate the affairs of the provincial governments.

150. The high priestess was an unmarried princess chosen at the beginning of a new emperor's reign to serve at the Inner Shrine at Ise, dedicated to the Sun Goddess Amaterasu.

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these were her mother's instructions, she took very good care of him. In the morning she saw him off on his hunting, and when he returned in the evenings she had him stay in her own lodgings. In this way, she treated him well.

On the night of the second day, the man said quite passionately that he wanted to meet her privately. The woman, too, was not ill-disposed toward their meeting. However, since there were many prying eyes, they were unable to meet. Since the man was the chief huntsman, he was lodged not far from the woman's own sleeping quarters. At the first hour of the rat,[151] when everyone had gone to sleep, she came to him. For his part, he had been unable to sleep and was lying down looking out into the night when he saw her standing there in the dim moonlight with a little girl in front of her. The man was overjoyed and led her into his chamber. She stayed until the third hour of the ox,[152] but they had hardly had time to do much at all when the woman returned to her rooms. The man, deeply saddened, could not sleep. In the morning he was impatient to hear from her, but it would not have been proper for him to send her a note, and he was waiting in distress when shortly after dawn, the following poem came from the woman, with no further message:

kimi ya koshi	Did you come to me?
ware wa yukiken	Did I go to you?
omōezu	I cannot tell.
yume ka utsutsu ka	A dream, or reality?
nete ka samete ka	Was I asleep, or awake?

Weeping piteously, the man composed this:

kakikurasu	I have wandered
kokoro no yami	in the darkness
madoiniki	of my heart.
yume utsutsu to wa	Let us decide tonight:
koyoi sadame yo	dream or reality.

After sending this to her, he went out hunting. He rode through the fields but was distracted by thoughts of meeting her that night, soon after the others went to sleep. But the governor of the province, who also oversaw affairs at the shrine, had heard that an imperial huntsman was visiting. He kept the man drinking through the night, and the pair was quite unable to meet. Since he had to move on to Owari Province the next day, the man wept tears of blood,[153]

151. Between 11:00 and 11:30 P.M.

152. Between 2:00 and 2:30 A.M.

153. "Tears of blood" is a conventional metaphor for extreme grief.

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unbeknownst to anyone, but still they could not meet. When dawn was breaking, a poem came from the woman, written on the saucer of a cup of parting. He took it up, and read:

kachibito no	Since ours is a bond
wataredo nurenu	shallow as waters that do not wet
e ni shi areba	the hem of a traveler's robes . . .

She had written this much, leaving the poem incomplete. Using charcoal from a pine torch, he wrote the last lines on the saucer:

mata Ausaka no	again I will cross
seki wa koenamu	the Gate of Meeting.

At daybreak he crossed into Owari Province.

The woman served as high priestess of Ise during the reign of Emperor Seiwa. She was the daughter of Emperor Montoku and the sister of Prince Koretaka.

Nagisa-no-in (82)

In the past, there was a prince known as Prince Koretaka. He had a palace at a place called Minase, on the far side of Yamazaki. Every year when the cherry blossoms were in full bloom, he went to that palace. On those occasions he always took along a person who was the director of the right imperial stables.[154] It was long ago and I have forgotten his name.

Not enthusiastic about hunting, they just drank saké continuously and turned to composing poems in Japanese. The cherry blossoms at the Nagisa residence in Katano, where they often hunted, were especially beautiful. They dismounted under the trees, and breaking off blossoms to decorate themselves, everyone, of high, middle, and low rank, composed poems. The director of the stables composed this:

yo no naka ni	If only this world
taete sakura no	were without cherry blossoms
nakariseba	then would our hearts
haru no kokoro wa	be at ease
nodokekaramashi	in springtime.

154. A post held by Narihira.

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Another person composed this:

chireba koso	It is because they fall soon
itodo sakura wa	that the cherry blossoms
medetakere	are so admired.
ukiyo ni nani ka	What can stay long
hisashikarubeki	in this fleeting world?

When they left the trees to return to Minase, it already was dark. The prince's attendants came from the fields with servants bringing the saké. Seeking out a good place to drink it, they came to a place called Amanokawa.[155] The director of the stables gave the prince a cup of saké. The prince said, "When you hand me the cup, compose a poem on coming to the banks of Amanokawa after hunting at Katano." The director of the stables composed this and handed it to him:

karikurashi	I've spent the day hunting
tanabata tsume ni	and now will seek lodging
yadokaramu	from the Weaver Maid
Ama no kawara ni	for I have come
ware wa kinikeri	to the River of Heaven.

The prince recited this over and over but could not come up with a response. Ki no Aritsune[156] was attending the prince. He responded:

hitotose ni	She who waits patiently
hitotabi kimasu	for a lord who comes
kimi mateba	but once a year
yado kasu hito mo	will not, I am sure,
araji to zo omou	lodge any other.[157]

They went back to Minase, and the prince entered his palace. They drank and conversed until deep in the night, and then the prince prepared to sleep, somewhat drunk. As the moon of the eleventh day of the month[158] began to sink behind the mountains, the director of the stables composed this:

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155. Literally, "river of heaven."

156. Ki no Aritsune (816–877) was Koretaka's uncle and Narihira's father-in-law.

157. These poems refer to the legendary Herdsman (the star Altair) and his wife, the Weaver Maid (the star Vega), who were separated by the River of Heaven (the Milky Way) and able to meet only once a year, on the seventh day of the Seventh Month (celebrated as the Tanabata Festival).

158. A waxing moon, about halfway between quarter and full.

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akanaku ni	How can the moon
madaki no tsuki no	hide itself
kakururu ka	before we are satisfied?
yama no ha nigete	I wish the mountain rim would flee
irezu mo aranamu	so the moon might stay in view.

In place of the prince, Ki no Aritsune replied:

oshinabete	I wish the peaks
mine mo taira ni	one and all
narinanamu	might be leveled:
yama no ha naku wa	if there were no mountain rims
tsuki mo iraji o	the moon would not hide.

In the Shade of Wisteria Blooms (101)

In the past, there was a commander of the left guards called Ariwara no Yukihira. Hearing that there was a batch of good wine at his house, some people who were at court visited, among them the middle controller of the left, Fujiwara no Masachika, who served as guest of honor for the day.

Since Yukihira was a man of sensibility, he had placed flowers in a vase. Among the flowers was a striking and unusual bough of wisteria extending more than three feet in length. Those present composed poems with that as their topic.

Just when they were finished, a brother of the host,[159] hearing that Yukihira was entertaining guests, came to join them. They cornered him and demanded he compose a poem. Claiming he knew nothing of poetry he declined,[160] but when they insisted, he made this:

saku hana no	How many they are
shita ni kakururu	who take refuge in the shade
hito o oomi	of wisteria that are
arishi ni masaru	greater now than
fuji no kage kamo	ever before![161]

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159. Narihira was Yukihira's half brother.

160. Narihira was the most celebrated male poet of the age. The claim here that he knows nothing about poetry may be taken as a ploy of modesty or an expression of distaste for having to compose a "banquet" poem on a set topic for the entertainment of officials of the Fujiwara lineage, his own lineage's historical enemies. The irony of his denial sharpens that of the following poem.

161. The poem can be read allegorically as a sarcastic comment on the usurpation of imperial authority by the Fujiwara lineage—of which the *fuji* (wisteria) blossom was an emblem—at the

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When someone asked, "Why did you compose a poem like that?"[162] he replied, "I was thinking of the chancellor's glorious ascent and the great successes of the Fujiwara clan." No one could find fault with his answer.[163]

Dying for Love (105)

In the past, when a man sent word to a woman, "I'll surely die if you treat me this way . . . ," the woman replied:

shiratsuyu wa	If the white dew must vanish,
kenaba kenanamu	let it vanish:
kiezu to te	even if it stayed
tama ni nuku beki	no one would care
hito mo araji o	to make it a string of gems.[164]

The man thought her reply was callous, but his feelings for her only increased.

Rain Test (107)

In the past, there was a man of some distinction. Someone called Fujiwara no Toshiyuki, who was a private secretary,[165] began to pursue a girl of the man's household. The girl, however, was very young, knew little of writing, had no command of diction, and could hardly compose a poem. The man prepared a draft of a poem and had her write it out and send it off. The recipient was quite dazzled.[166] He composed this in reply:

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expense of Narihira's own Ariwara lineage, whose name is suggested in the phrase *arishi*, meaning "as things were" (translated here as " . . . ever before"). It can also be taken, in a more naive but still allegorical reading, as praise for the largesse of the Fujiwara hegemons.

162. The question is posed by one of the Fujiwara guests and calls attention to the ambiguity of the poem, which is far more sophisticated than was expected of a conventional banquet poem.

163. To find fault with the poem, reading it as veiled sarcasm despite the poet's claim that he simply meant to praise the Fujiwara lineage's success, would cast doubt on the loyalties of the critic rather than the poet.

164. Droplets of dew are conventionally imaged as gems (*tama*). The word *tama* also means "soul" and, by extension, "life." Thus "string of gems" (*tama no o*) is a common metaphor for a human life. The woman informs the man that for all she cares, he may as well die. This is the only episode in the book in which the man fails to send the woman a poem, and it serves to underscore the consequences.

165. This post, in the Ministry of Central Affairs, called for expertise in drafting official documents, and in fact Toshiyuki was one of the most acclaimed calligraphers of his time.

166. Toshiyuki assumes that it was the girl's poem and not that of her employer, Narihira.

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tsurezure no	Helpless to meet you,
nagame ni masaru	I can only gaze on these
namidagawa	endless rains,
sode nomi hijite	a river of tears
au yoshi mo nashi	drenching my sleeves.

In reply the man wrote, again on the girl's behalf:

asami koso	How shallow
sode wa hizurame	a river of tears
namidagawa	that wets only your sleeves:
mi sae nagaru to	when I hear you are drowning
kikaba tanomu	I'll trust the depths of your love.

On receiving this, Toshiyuki[167] was so overwhelmed that he rolled it up and to this day is said to keep it in his letter box.

Toshiyuki sent a letter to the woman. This was some time after he had won her consent. "I'm afraid it may rain. If I am fortunate, the rain won't fall."[168] As before, the girl's employer composed a poem on her behalf and had it delivered:

kazukazu ni	It is not for me
omoi omowazu	to ask if I matter
toigatami	or not to you:
mi o shiru zo	rain like falling tears
ame wa masareru	will tell.

On receiving this, he left both raincoat and hat behind and rushed blindly to her, drenched in rain and tears.

Deep Grasses (123)

In the past, there was a man. He must have grown weary of a woman who lived in Fukakusa, since he sent her this poem:

toshi o hete	If I leave this village
sumikoshi sato o	my home all these years

167. The text has "the man," which refers here and later not to Narihira but to Toshiyuki. The word signals clearly that Toshiyuki is or will soon become the girl's lover.

168. Rainfall was one of many familiar excuses men used to avoid visiting a wife or lover at night. Toshiyuki suggests that he is hoping to visit her tonight, but only if rain does not fall.

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idete inaba	will it become
itodo fukakusa	a moor
no to ya narinamu	of ever deeper grasses?

The woman replied:

no to naraba	If it becomes a moor
uzura to narite	I will become a quail
nakioramu	and cry.
kari ni dani yaha	Would you then come back,
kimi wa kozaramu	even for a while, as a hunter?

Moved by her reply, the man gave up the thought of leaving her.

The Road All Must Travel (125)

In the past, a man fell ill and felt that he would soon die.

tsui ni yuku	I had heard
michi to wa kanete	there is a path
kikishikado	that all must follow
kinō kyō to wa	but didn't think yesterday
omowazarishi o	that I'd be going today . . . [169]

[Introduction and translations by Jamie Newhard and Lewis Cook]

KI NO TSURAYUKI

Despite his relatively humble social status, in his later years Ki no Tsurayuki (872?–945) was among the most highly respected poets of his age. One of four poets commissioned to compile the *Kokinshū*, he was essentially its editor in chief, and the collection closely conforms to his tastes. As the author of the *Kana* Preface to the anthology, the single most canonical statement of the principles of native Japanese poetry, his influence on the tradition was immense and remained unquestioned until the end of the nineteenth century. As a poet, he was a consummate technician as well as the author of many of the most memorably lyrical poems in the anthology.

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169. An alternative, less piquant interpretation of the last two lines would read: "but I never thought it might be yesterday or today." This is the interpretation that most modern scholars and many premodern commentaries prefer and is grammatically simpler. A late-sixteenth-century commentary by Hosokawa Yūsai, for example, states indignantly of the reading taken as the basis of our translation that it is "very improper" (or "impudent" [*ooki ni kitanashi*]), implying that it violates the aesthetic of imprecision associated with postclassical ideals of elegance.

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TOSA DIARY (*TOSA NIKKI*, CA. 935)

The *Tosa Diary*, which was written by Ki no Tsurayuki about 935, is known as the first prose diary in the kana syllabary. Like the *Kana* Preface to the *Kokinshū*, which Tsurayuki also wrote, the *Tosa Diary* is an example in the kana script of a genre typically written in Chinese prose. Tsurayuki's choice of the native syllabary allowed him to enrich the diary's narrative with vivid dialogue, wordplay, song, and waka poetry.

Tsurayuki was appointed governor of Tosa Province (on the large island of Shikoku, facing the Inland Sea) in 930, and he is believed to have written the *Tosa Diary* some time after his five-year term as governor had ended. Describing the journey home of a former provincial governor and his entourage from Tosa along the Inland Sea back to the capital, the diary seems to closely parallel the author's own experiences. The choice of a female attendant as the diary's ostensible narrator, however, blurs the boundaries between autobiography and fiction. Many scholars have seen this fictional pose as an attempt to create a new, more literary form freed from the constraints on a male official writing in the diary genre. As such, the *Tosa Diary* has often been treated as the pioneer of what in the modern period came to be called "diary literature" (*nikki bungaku*), which includes the *Kagerō Diary*, *Murasaki Shikibu's Diary*, and the *Sarashina Diary*, highly autobiographical accounts by Heian court women written in kana.

Some scholars have seen the choice of a fictional female narrator as a way to distance the author from criticism for the diary's frequently sardonic characterizations of people and social customs. Many believe the diary's expressions of grief and loss would not have been deemed fit material for a male official's diary. Others argue that it was Tsurayuki's desire to write in kana that prompted him to assume a feminine pose. In any event, the *Tosa Diary* appears to deviate deliberately from the conventions of court diaries in Tsurayuki's time. The diary begins when the governor's duties end, and his name and the year in which the journey takes place are left uncertain.

Instead of court ceremonial and administrative details, waka poetry and its poetics occupy the central place in the *Tosa Diary*. In addition to waka, the diary includes some of the earliest known renditions of popular songs and chanted lines from Chinese poems, and its figures often are evaluated on the basis of their ability to compose occasional poetry in response to various social situations. This commentary offers tantalizing, though often cryptic, clues to the practice and poetics of waka composition at the time.

I wrote this wondering what it would be like for a woman to try her hand at one of those diaries that men are said to keep. One year, around eight in the evening of the twenty-first day of the Twelfth Month, I embarked on a journey. What follows are notes on some of the things that took place.

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A certain person had just received official clearance to return to the capital upon completing the usual term of four or five years in his provincial posting.[170] We set out from the governor's mansion to the place where we were to board our boat, and people we knew and some we didn't came to see us off. Those who had come to know us well over the past few years were loath to see us go, and we spent the whole day, well into the night, in confusion, getting ready to depart. . . .

It is now the seventh [of the First Month], and we still are in the same harbor of Ōminato. I recall, in vain, that today the New Year's Presentation of White Horses is held at court.[171] The only white we can see here is that of the waves.

During the day, long chests were delivered to us from the home of someone who lives in a place called "Pond." Despite the name, there were no carp in them, but they were filled with many other foods, including perch and numerous other fish from both river and sea. The fresh greens reminded us of the New Year's plucking of shoots at home in the capital. The gifts came with this poem:

asajiu no	A wild moor
nobe ni shi areba	thick with weeds
mizu mo naki	but no water:
ike ni tsumitsuru	such is the "Pond" where I
wakana narikeri	gathered these herbs.

How charming. The "Pond" of the poem is the name of the place. The poem was by a woman of rank who came to live with her husband in the provinces.[172] The chests' contents were shared with everyone, including the children. When all had eaten their fill, the sailors drummed on their taut bellies. The sound was enough to startle even the sea god. No doubt we are in for waves.

Much else happened during the day. Someone came bringing lunch boxes. I'm sure his name will come back to me in a moment.[173] It was clear that his heart was set on making a verse for the occasion. After talking about this and that for a while, he sighed mournfully and remarked, "Alas, the waves are rising," and then recited his poem:

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170. The person referred to here is Ki no Tsurayuki, the author of the *Tosa Diary*.

171. The author is keenly aware that promotions and appointments to official posts are announced at court on this day.

172. This implies that the woman who wrote the poem and sent the chests of food came from the capital in the company of a husband serving as a provincial official there.

173. The narrator graciously pretends to have forgotten the man's name in order to excuse a candid report of his pretensions and shortcomings as a poet. Apart from its bathetic hyperbole, the poem he offers inauspiciously suggests that the departing travelers will encounter rough seas.

Bahan dengan hak cipta

yuku saki ni	Louder than the roar of the
tatsu shiranami no	white-crested waves
koe yori mo	rising in your path
okurete nakamu	will my cries resound
ware ya masaramu	when you depart.

He must have some voice. How could this poem compare with the things he had brought? We made a show of being impressed, but no one offered a poem in reply. Even though there was someone among them who was more than capable of replying,[174] all we did was praise his poem and continue eating until nightfall.

Finally the man said, "Excuse me," and got up to leave. Just then, a child sitting in the back of our group whispered, "I'll offer a reply." Those of us near enough to hear were surprised and started to speak among ourselves, saying how charming this would be, and that if the girl was really going to compose something, she ought to do so at once. Hoping he might wait for the poem, we looked around for our erstwhile guest. But he had already left, no doubt because night had fallen.

We still were curious. Someone asked the child to tell us what she had composed. She was shy and said nothing until pressed, then recited this poem:

yuku hito mo	The sleeves of those who leave
tomaru mo sode no	and those who stay
namidagawa	are drenched in a stream of tears,
migiwa nomi koso	swelling to soak them
nure masarikere	ever more.

What a fine verse—was it because the poet was so pretty that this seemed such a pleasant surprise? Still, what were we to do with a child's verse? An aunt or an uncle might put their signature on it. Not the right thing to do, perhaps. Someone suggested sending the verse to our visitor, but nothing was done, after all. . . .

The morning of the ninth [of the First Month]. We rowed out from Ōminato hoping to reach the harbor at Naha. Since we were leaving the bounds of the province, a great many people came to see us off. Fujiwara no Tokizane, Tachibana no Suehira, and Hasebe no Yukimasa in particular had been following us since the day we left the governor's mansion. These are truly men of feeling, their consideration as deep as the ocean before us.

We were about to leave the harbor and row into the offing, and these people had come to see us off. As we rowed out to sea, those who remained ashore

174. This tacitly refers to Tsurayuki himself.

Bahan dengan hak cipta

receded into the distance, and those on the boat faded from their sight. Those on the shore must have had things left unsaid, and those of us on the boat felt the same, but there was no help for it. Nonetheless, I spoke this verse to myself before giving up such thoughts:

omoiyaru	I would send my feelings
kokoro wa umi o	across the sea,
wataredomo	but feelings not being words
fumi shi nakereba	how could they know
shirazu ya aruramu	my thoughts?

We passed by the Uda Pines. Both the number of trees and the years they have grown there are beyond counting. The waves washed up near each root, and cranes flew above each branch. Unable to remain silent, someone on the boat composed this verse:

miwataseba	I gaze across at the pines:
matsu no uregoto ni	the cranes that roost
sumu tsuru wa	on every branch
chiyo no dochi to zo	must take these evergreens
omou beranaru	for age-old companions.

The poem could hardly rival the sight itself. I watched the mountains and sea as we rowed into the gathering dusk. In the dark of night, I couldn't tell east from west, and we could only leave it to the captain to judge the weather. Even the men on board, not used to traveling at sea, were worried. As for the women, lying with their heads against the bilge, they could only weep aloud. Feeling sorry for them, and not at all worried themselves, the crew and captain began singing boatmen's songs:

haru no no nite zo	In the fields in spring
ne oba naku	I weep aloud,
waga susuki ni	my hands are cut
te kiru kiru	by sharp blades of grass,
tsundaru na o	the greens that I gather
oya ya maboru ramu	will be grabbed by his father,
shūtome ya kuu ramu	devoured by his mother.
kaera ya	How I long to go home![175]
yonbe no	Where's that girl
unai mogana	who just last night

175. The song usually is seen as expressing the plight of a young woman married to a farmer's son.

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zeni kowamu	begged for my money
soragoto o shite	telling sweet lies
oginoriwaza o shite	buying on credit
zeni mo mote kozu	bringing no payment
onore dani kozu	not even bringing herself?[176]

There were many others that I won't write down. They made us laugh, and though the sea was rough, our hearts were eased a bit. . . .

At daybreak on the thirteenth a little rain fell, then it stopped after a while. Several of the women got off the boat and went looking for a suitable place to bathe. Looking out at the sea, I composed this verse:

kumo mo mina	All of the clouds
nami to zo miyuru	look so like waves
ama mogana	I wish for a diver,
izure ka umi to	a girl I could ask
toite shiru beku	"Which is the sea?"

Since it is past the tenth of the month, the moon in the dawn sky is charming. From the day we boarded the boat, the women have not once worn fine robes of red silk, fearful of catching the sea god's attention. Now, barely hidden by the cover of a few scant reeds, they have hitched up their skirts past their knees, carelessly showing the abalones and clams that go so well with sea squirts. . . .[177]

The twentieth. The weather is still unfavorable, and our boat stays in port. Everyone is complaining. Frustrated and anxious, I wonder how many days have passed since we set out. Has it been twenty? Thirty? Just counting them would hurt one's fingers. How dreary.

I stay awake all night. The moon of the twentieth rises in the sky, not from the rim of a mountain peak but straight from the sea. Was it a sight like this that was seen, in the distant past, by the man known as Abe no Nakamaro, who had journeyed to the land of the Tang?[178] When he was readying to board a boat to return home, the people of that realm, reluctant to see him go, held a

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176. This is a comic song in the voice of a merchant deceived by a girl.

177. The women avoided wearing fine clothing on board, observing a belief that to do so would risk attracting the covetous eye of the sea god. The same women, now bathing in the partial cover of reeds on the shore, expose their vaginas, referred to by a familiar visual pun as shellfish. Mention of the sea squirt, a stand-in for penis, underscores the reference. This act was presumably a ritual gesture meant to placate the ever-lustful sea god.

178. A similar account is given in the note for an almost identical poem in the *Kokinshū* (no. 604), at the opening of the travel section. According to the official court chronicle *Shoku Nihon kōki*, Abe no Nakamaro (697–770) went to study in China when he was nineteen. He served at the court of the Tang emperor until his death at the age of seventy-three.

Material com direitos autorais

farewell party. They composed Chinese verses and, hesitating to part, lingered until the moon of the twentieth rose in the night sky. At the sight of the moon, Master Nakamaro said, "In my country, verses such as this were sung by the gods in their sacred age and, even today, are composed by people of all ranks—high, middle, and low—when they feel the regret of parting, or in celebration or in sadness," and he composed this:

awounabara	I look out
furisake mireba	across the wide blue sea
Kasuga naru	and see the same moon
Mikasa no yama ni	that once rose over Mount Mikasa
ideshi tsuki ka mo	in distant Kasuga.[179]

Aware that the people of that country would be unable to understand the verse as recited, he sketched its meaning in Chinese characters and explained it to someone there who had learned our language.[180] They must have been able to understand his feelings, since they expressed immoderate praise for his poem. The speech of China and that of our country may differ, but the light of the moon is the same everywhere, and so it must be with the human heart.

Inspired by this story from the past, someone composed the following verse:

miyako nite	The same moon I saw
yama no ha ni	in the capital
mishi tsuki naredo	over the mountain rim
nami yori idete	now rises from the ocean's waves
nami koso ire	and sets there, too.

The fourth [of the Second Month]. The captain told us, "The weather looks very bad today," so we ended up staying in port. And in spite of that, there was not a single wind-tossed wave all day. Our captain is useless when it comes to predicting the weather.

The beach where we docked was covered with a variety of lovely shells and pebbles. Seeing them, someone on our boat who had lost a daughter composed this verse:

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179. Mount Mikasa in Nara was also the location of ceremonies held to ensure the safe return of embassies sent to China. Kasuga is near present-day Nara city. This poem alters the first line of the *Kokinshū* poem from *ama no hara* (fields of heaven) to *awounabara* (wide blue sea), making it more suitable for a sea travel poem. The poem creates a temporal and spatial overlap between Tang China and Japan, between which the moon serves as a metaphorical bridge.

180. The term used here for "Chinese characters" is *otoko-moji*, literally "men's letters," a reference to the fact that the use of Chinese characters to represent Japanese texts in script was a prerogative of men.

Material com direitos autorais

yosuru nami	Let the incoming waves
uchi mo yosenamu	bring to shore
waga kouru	"forgetting shells"
hito wasure-gai	that I might gather
orite hirowamu	to ease my longing for her.

Hearing this, someone else felt compelled to compose this to dispel the gloom of those on board:

wasure-gai	I'll not gather shells
hiroishi mo seji	of forgetfulness—
shiratama no	I'd rather keep
kouru o dani mo	my longing
katami to omowamu	for that bright gem.[181]

The parent has been made weak as a child on account of her daughter. Someone may well ask, "Was she really as pretty as a gem?" Still, they say, "a dead child has a pretty face." . . . [182]

The ninth [of the Second Month]. We were filled with impatience as our boat was towed upriver before daybreak, but since there isn't enough water in the river, we are reduced to a crawling pace. Eventually we came to a fork in the river called Wada no Tomari. Here, people begged for rice and fish and some was handed out.

As the boat was towed upstream, a place called Nagisa Villa came into view. Looking at it and thinking of its past, we realized that it was indeed a charming place. In the hills behind were pine trees, and inside the courtyard, plum trees were in bloom. People started talking. Long ago this was a famous place. This is where the middle captain, Ariwara no Narihira, in attendance on Prince Koretaka, composed that poem,

yo no naka ni	If in this world
taete sakura no	no cherry flowers bloomed
sakazaraba	then would our hearts
haru no kokoro wa	be at ease
nodokekaramashi	in springtime?[183]

181. The first forget-me shell poem can be read as a plea to forget (*wasure*) the dead child in favor of hurrying ashore to gather *wasuregai* clams in the waves of an incoming tide. The second poem appears to be an attempt to pacify the dead girl by bestowing an epithet of praise, *shiratama no* (bright gem), on her. Perhaps the speaker is worried that her spirit might be offended by the previous poem.

182. This was apparently a proverbial saying.

183. See *The Tales of Ise*, sec. 82 (the Nagisa-no-in episode). The poem has been read as a seasonal lament, a comment on the brevity of human life, and a veiled criticism of the Fujiwara

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Then someone with us here and now composed a verse evoking the setting and its past:

chiyo hetaru	Though a thousand years
matsu ni wa aredo	may have passed,
inishie no	the chill in the sound
koe no samusa wa	of these pines
kawarazarikeri	hasn't changed.

And yet another person composed this:

kimi koite	Longing for their lord,
yo o furu yado no	the plum blossoms
mume no hana	of his ancient dwelling
mukashi no ka ni zo	are as fragrant now
nao nioikeru	as they were in the past.

And so we continued upstream, rejoicing as we drew nearer to the capital. Several of my fellow travelers were accompanied by children they had not had when they went down this same river, children born during their stay in the province of Tosa. Whenever the boat stopped, they would carry their children with them as they went ashore. Seeing this, the mother whose child had died was unable to contain her grief and sobbed as she composed this:

nakarishi mo	Those who had none
aritsutsu kaeru	now return with theirs:
hito no ko o	others' children
arishi mo nakute	bring sorrow to one who
kuru ga kanashisa	has lost her own.

What must the father have felt as he heard this? Such overwhelming emotions, and the poems they provoke, are hardly matters of self-indulgence.[184] It is said

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regency. The diarist changes the middle line from *nakariseba* (if there were none) to *sakazaraba* (if none bloomed).

184. The argument is that just as one does not indulge in such displays of emotion—referring to the mother's crying aloud in grief—out of self-indulgence, so one does not, or *should* not, compose poetry merely for the sake of amusement or aesthetic satisfaction. This argument is consonant with Tsurayuki's claims in the opening passage of the *Kana* Preface to the *Kokinshū*, that acts of poetry or song are not an optional but an indispensable element of human existence. The following sentence refers to an often-quoted statement in the Mao Preface to the Chinese *Book of Songs* about poetry as action.

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in China and here as well that poetry is an action one resorts to when feelings cannot be silenced. . . .

The sixteenth. This evening we made our way to the capital. . . .

We waited for night before entering the city, and as we were taking our time, the moon came into view. We crossed the Katsura River under its brilliant light. Some of our party commented on how different this river was from the Asuka, notorious for varying between depths and shallows without warning. In response, someone composed this poem:

hisakata no	The light of the moon
tsuki ni oitaru	on this river's waters
Katsura-gawa	remains as unchanged as
soko naru kage mo	its evergreen namesake,
kawarazarikeri	the moon's *katsura* tree.[185]

Someone responded with this:

amagumo no	Once as distant
haruka naritsuru	as heaven's clouds,
Katsura-gawa	the Katsura River
sode o hidete mo	now soaks my sleeves
watarinuru kana	as I cross.

Yet another person composed this verse:

Katsura-gawa	Though the Katsura River
waga kokoro ni mo	does not run through
kayowanedo	my heart,
onaji fukasa ni	the depths
nagaru beranari	of both must be the same.

So much joy on returning to the capital, hence so many poems.

185. This and the following poem play on the association between the Katsura River and the laurel tree of the same name. According to a Chinese legend widely known in Japan, a katsura tree is said to grow on the moon. The poem is based on the conceit that just as the katsura, an evergreen, does not change color, so the river of that name is of constant depth, unlike the fickle Asuka River.

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As the night deepened, we could not tell one place from another.[186] We are glad to be back in the capital! When we reached our residence and passed through the gate, we saw very clearly in the bright moonlight how things were. The house was far more dilapidated than we had been warned while away. The same must be true of the sensibilities of those we left in charge of the house. Though a fence divided our houses, we were as one family, and our neighbors offered to look after our place. To think that we had sent gifts every time we sent a message. Still, we did not raise our voices in complaint tonight. Unpleasant as it may be, we will have to offer a token of gratitude.

On the grounds of our residence, there is a depression filled with water, like a pond. It was surrounded by pine trees. During the past five or six years (it feels like a thousand), half of them have died, though some saplings have begun to grow among the surviving trees. Everything else was in ruin, and many sighs were heard. I recalled everything that had happened, and among the most painful were memories of the girl who, though born in this house, had not come back with us. Those who had traveled with us on the boat were playing noisily with their own children. There was one still unable to overcome her grief, and someone who understood quietly composed this:

mumareshi mo	Even as a child born here
kaeranu mono o	does not return,
waga yado ni	how sad to see
komatsu no aru o	these pine saplings
miru ga kanashisa	growing by our house.[187]

As though this were not enough, he composed another:

mishi hito no	If only I could have seen her
matsu no chitose ni	for as long as the
mimashikaba	pine's thousand years
tōku kanashiki	and not known the sorrow
wakare semashi ya	of that distant parting.

I have much else to regret, much that is difficult to forget, but there is no end to writing such things. I should throw this away and be done with it.

[Translated by Gustav Heldt]

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186. As we are reminded in the next sentence, the moon is still shining brightly. This comment suggests that familiar structures of the city are visible only in silhouette against stark shadows and thus are more difficult to identify than they would have been under less intense moonlight.

187. The implication is that although many of the pine trees in the garden died while their owners were away, new ones will replace them. The child, however, cannot be replaced.

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MINAMOTO NO TAMENORI

Minamoto no Tamenori (941?–1011) was the son of Emperor Kōkō (r. 884–887), but he became a commoner and took the Minamoto surname. Both his grandfather and his father ended their careers as provincial governors. Tamenori entered the state university (*daigakuryō*); studied directly with Minamoto no Shitagō (911–983), one of the leading poets and intellectuals of the period; and was eventually promoted to a provincial governorship. Although Tamenori was gifted in Chinese poetry and prose, he did not belong to a hereditary family of scholars and was not promoted in that line of duty.

ILLUSTRATION OF THE THREE JEWELS (*SANBŌE-KOTOBA*, 984)

Illustration of the Three Jewels was written by Minamoto no Tamenori in 984 for Princess Sonshi, who had taken holy vows in 982 at the age of seventeen. The text had illustrations (thus the title), which have been lost, and includes a number of anecdotes (*setsuwa*) drawn from previous anecdotal collections, sutras, and legends. It thus is often regarded as a collection of anecdotes, but it is probably best regarded as an introduction to Buddhism for beginners, specifically young, high-ranking women. The following preface not only presents the fundamental principles of Buddhism, but also reveals the fundamental Buddhist attitude toward the Heian-period monogatari.

The General Preface

Long ago it was written:

> Contemplate the body:
> it is but rootless grass
> lying on the riverbank;
> and as for this life:
> it is but a small boat
> drifting at the channel's edge.[188]

And elsewhere:

> To what shall I compare this life?
> To white waves of foam trailing behind
> a boat putting out at break of day.[189]

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188. The image of the drifting boat appears in the "Lie Yukou" chapter of the *Zhuangzi*.
189. This poem alludes to a variant of a poem in the *Man'yōshū* (no. 351).

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Thus, in both China and Japan, people who understood the essence of things expressed the same thought. Indeed, in the teachings of the truly enlightened, universally compassionate Buddha we find these words: "This world is absolutely insubstantial, like the bubbles on the water, the shadow of the mist. You must reject this world as soon as possible and free yourselves from it."[190] The Buddha is the father of all sentient beings; with what fatherly wisdom did he offer this guidance to his children! There are many people in this land who have heard this teaching, but they assume that summer insects are safe as long as the dew is on the grass, and then mourn them when they go up in smoke—what foolishness![191] That "Rude Courier" will rush them headlong toward the way of darkness, and the "Harassing Demon"[192] will say, "You were born as a human being and you had your chance, but you failed to practice the Way! It is as if you had gone into a mine full of treasure and come out empty-handed! And it is your own fault; you have no one to blame but yourself." Your shame and contrition will be of no avail when you face his pitiless attack!

One thousand, nine hundred, and thirty-three years have passed since the Buddha Shakyamuni left this world. We may now be in the Age of the Simulated Law, but surely only a few years of this interim period remain to us.[193] Those who have the misfortune to be born as human beings at this time have less chance of receiving the Buddha's teaching than a thread dangled from heaven has of going through the eye of a needle in the middle of the sea. Even if they manage to free themselves from this life, they will never have any assurance of what will become of them hereafter. At this time there is nothing to do but contemplate the Buddha, hear his Teachings, and revere his Clerical Community.

Have you not heard of the elder of Rajagrha who gathered treasures and rejoiced in the flourishing of his household, only to die and become a snake whose lot it was to guard his former mansion and storehouse?[194] And do you not know of the lady of Sravasti who constantly gazed into her mirror in order to admire her own beauty, only to become an insect at the end of her life and dwell in what was formerly her own skull?[195] While they lived they never

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190. A quotation from chapter 6 of the Lotus Sutra.

191. In Chinese and Japanese poetry, summer insects and the burning of summer grasses usually symbolize passion.

192. Couriers of the land of the dead who tortured those condemned to hell.

193. The second of three periods of Buddhist law. The first period was that of *shōbō* (true law), the first five hundred or thousand years after the death of Shakyamuni, when the true Buddhist law was carried out with effect. The second period was that of *zōbō* (simulated law), which lasted for a thousand years. During this period, the Buddhist law existed, but true practice could not be carried out. In the third period, that of *mappō*, which lasted for ten thousand years, the teachings of the Buddha have been abandoned, practice is not carried out, and enlightenment is not possible by oneself.

194. Rajagrha was a city in India that was thriving at the time of Shakyamuni.

195. Sravasti was another Indian city.

เนื้อหาคุ้มครองลิขสิทธิ์

thought they would become a snake or an insect, but they took inordinate pride in wealth and beauty, and so they brought their fate on themselves. So a flourishing household is a likely site for sinning; you must abandon it and seek out the Buddha's country. Have no second thoughts for your worldly beauty; forget it and pray that you may attain the Buddha's body. Follow his traces in the sutras that survive today to discover the Way to Buddhahood. The eons pile up, the ages pass one after another, and though you strive, the goal is difficult to reach. If each day you give yourself over to your true desire, even if only for a moment, you will surely attain it. You may build one hundred thousand million trillion jeweled stupas, or copy eighty-four thousand holy scriptures, or donate countless wonderful treasures to the poor, or even cut up your body and give it away, but the Buddha never said that these acts were superior to all others. There is, however, nothing among all acts of devotion to compare with the merit derived from one day and one night as a sworn monk or nun. All the inhabitants of the Buddha's world rejoice in this act, while the forces of evil tremble with fear. This is the boat that will carry you across the endless seas of life and death, the provision for your journey to the mountain of Nirvana. Look, for example, at the brahman who was always drunk; he wore the garb of a monk but briefly, but this enabled him to hear the Teaching. Think of Utpalavarna, who wore nun's clothing as a joke but was thereby able to meet the Buddha of that age.[196] Even these cases of drunken bumbling and playful masquerade produced good seeds that were certain to yield good effects; so if you have a clever mind and sincere intentions, you are all the more capable of generating unlimited merit! . . .

Go may seem like a pleasing way to pass the time, but there is no profit to be had in challenging others to games of skill. The *koto* may also serve as your companion for the night, but you should not let yourself become too attached to its sound. Then there are the so-called *monogatari*, which have such an effect on ladies' hearts. They flourish in numbers greater than the grasses of Ōaraki Forest, more countless than the sands on the Arisomi beaches.[197] They attribute speech to trees and plants, mountains and rivers, birds and beasts, fish and insects that cannot speak; they invest unfeeling objects with human feelings and ramble on and on with meaningless phrases like so much flotsam in the sea, with no two words together that have any more solid basis than does swamp grass growing by a river bank.[198] *The Sorceress of Iga*, *The Tosa Lord*, *The Fashionable Captain*, *The Nagai Chamberlain*, and all the rest depict relations

196. These stories appear in the *Daichidoron*, a sutra commentary written by the famous Buddhist philosopher Nagarjuna (ca. 150–250 C.E.).

197. In the Japanese poetic tradition, both these images are conventional symbols of infinity.

198. In Japanese poetry, swamp grass is a symbol of instability.

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between men and women just as if they were so many flowers or butterflies, but do not let your heart get caught up even briefly in these tangled roots of evil, these forests of words.[199]

[Translated by Edward Kamens]

PURE LAND BUDDHISM AND THE LITERARY IMAGINATION

In the late ninth century, Pure Land (Jōdo) Buddhism was derived from Tendai Buddhism, the dominant Buddhist school during the Heian period. It first spread among middle- and lower-rank aristocracy and then, with the rise of the Fujiwara regency in the tenth century, was adopted by the upper-rank nobility. Fujiwara no Michinaga (966–1027), the most powerful regent of his time, was a fervent believer in Pure Land. Pure Land thought was based on the assumption that this world is ephemeral and polluted and that to be saved, one must utter the name of the Amida Buddha so as to be reborn in the eternal and peaceful paradise of the Pure Land, over which the Amida Buddha presided.

Pure Land Buddhist thought emphasized simultaneously the beauty of the Pure Land and the horrors of hell. Pure Land followers believed that fearing hell (where sin was punished) and being drawn to the Pure Land made it easier to be reborn in the Pure Land, or the Western Paradise. Genshin's *Essentials of Salvation* (*Ōjōyōshū,* 985), which vividly describes both the horrors of hell and the wonders of this Pure Land, had a profound impact from the tenth century onward on the literary imagination as well as on Buddhist painting, sculpture, and architecture. A good example is the Byōdō-in (temple) in Uji (south of Kyoto), where a hall with the statue of the Amida Buddha stands in the middle of a small lake filled with lotus flowers, re-creating the Pure Land on earth.

Starting in the latter half of the tenth century, a number of literati who were adept at writing Chinese poetry and prose retreated from, or were barred from, prominent positions at court. These literati, the most noted of whom was Yoshishige no Yasutane (d. 1002), were inspired by Pure Land thought. Together with Genshin, Yasutane formed the Kangakue, a religious study group focusing on the issue of rebirth in the Pure Land in relation to everyday life. In the "Record of a Pond Pavilion" (Chiteiki), which is contained in *Literary Essence of Our Country* (*Honchō monzui*) and also in this anthology, Yasutane describes how to live physically in this world while abandoning it spiritually.

199. These are presumably titles of tenth-century works of prose fiction, none of which has survived.

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GENSHIN

Genshin (942–1017), the author of *The Essentials of Salvation*, is said to have lost his father at an early age and, around the age of nine, to have made his way to Mount Hiei, the center of Tendai Buddhism, where he studied Tendai with Ryōgen (912–985), one of the leading Tendai priests. At the age of around forty, Genshin retired to the Yokawa Shūryōgon-in (Tenryaku-ji temple) on Mount Hiei, where he wrote *The Essentials of Salvation* in a period of only six months.

THE ESSENTIALS OF SALVATION (*ŌJŌYŌSHŪ*, 985)

The Essentials of Salvation, which is largely an adaptation of scriptural writing on the Amida teaching, describes the six transmigratory paths or ways, the Pure Land (Jōdo) or paradise of the Amida Buddha, and the methods of being reborn there. *The Essentials of Salvation* assumes that the world has entered *mappō*, the latter age of the Buddhist law or the age of the degenerate law, when enlightenment by one's own power no longer is possible.[200] This polluted world consists of six hierarchical paths (*rokudō*) governed by karmic causality (with good and bad acts pushing a person up or down the ladder). The six paths are hell (*jigoku*), hungry demons (*gaki*), beasts (*chikusho*), warrior demons (*ashura*), humans, and devas or heavenly creatures (*ten*). People in this world fear the horrors of hell and try to rise to the world of heavenly creatures. Standing in contrast to the polluted world is the Pure Land. By placing their faith in the Amida Buddha and chanting Amida's name (*nenbutsu*), believers can, it is said, be saved and reborn in the Pure Land. Genshin underscores the similarity of the horrors of hell to the world of humans: both are places of suffering and pollution, unlike the Pure Land. In practice, followers of *The Essentials of Salvation* in the mid-Heian period, such as Fujiwara no Michinaga, read the text in much simpler terms, as describing two worlds, the present world and the future world, which were divided into hell and heaven.

The Essentials of Salvation provides detailed and graphic descriptions of heaven and hell and is written and organized so that its message can be readily understood. One result was that it had an enormous impact on the formation of later Pure Land teachings; on Heian monogatari such as *The Tale of Genji*, *A Tale of Flowering Fortunes*, and *Collection of Tales of Times Now Past* (*Konjaku monogatari shū*); and on Buddhist visual arts. Genshin's work also inspired the *raigō* (heavenly descent) paintings that depicted the Amida Buddha and his attendants, the bodhisattvas Kannon and Seishi, descending to welcome a dying person who had uttered the Amida's name. In the Kamakura period, *The Essentials of Salvation* inspired the pioneers of Pure

200. The year 1052 was thought to be the beginning of *mappō* from late Heian.

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Land Buddhism such as Hōnen (1133–1212) and had a deep impact on *The Tales of the Heike*, especially "The Initiates' Book" (Kanjō no maki), waka, and nō drama.

The teaching and practice that leads to birth in the Pure Land is the most important thing in this impure world during these degenerate times. Monks and laymen, men of high or low station, who will not turn to it? But the literature of the exoteric and the esoteric teachings of Buddha in text are not one, and the practices of one's work in this life in its ritualistic and philosophical aspects are many. These are not difficult for men of keen wisdom and great diligence, but how can a stupid person like me achieve this knowledge? Because of this I have chosen nenbutsu, the one gate to salvation.[201] I have made selections from the important sutras and scriptures and have set them forth so that they may be readily understood and their disciplines easily practiced. In all there are ten divisions, divided into three volumes. The first is the corrupt life that one must shun; the second is the Pure Land that one should seek; the third is the proof of the existence of the Pure Land; the fourth is the correct practice of nenbutsu; the fifth is the helpful means of practicing the nenbutsu; the sixth is the practice of nenbutsu on special occasions; the seventh is the benefit resulting from nenbutsu; the eighth is the proof of the benefit accruing from nenbutsu alone; the ninth is the conduct leading to birth in the Pure Land, and the tenth comprises questions and answers to selected problems. These I place to the right of where I sit lest I forget them.

The first division, the corrupt land that one must shun, comprises the three realms[202] in which there is no peace. Now, in order to make clear the external appearances of this land, it is divided into seven parts: (1) hell, (2) hungry demons, (3) beasts, (4) fighting demons, (5) humans, (6) devas (heavenly creatures), and (7) a conclusion.

The first of these, hell, is furthermore divided into eight parts: (1) the hell of repeated misery, (2) the hell of the black chains, (3) the hell of mass suffering, (4) the hell of wailing, (5) the hell of great wailing, (6) the hell of searing heat, (7) the hell of great searing heat, and (8) the hell of incessant suffering.

The Corrupt Land That One Must Shun

The hell of repeated misery is one thousand *yojanas*[203] beneath India and its environs and is ten thousand yojanas in length and breadth. Sinners here are always possessed of the desire to do one another harm. Should they by chance see one another, they behave as does the hunter when he encounters a deer.

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201. Meditation on or repetition of the name of the Amida Buddha.
202. Past, present, and future.
203. The distance an army can march in one day.

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With iron claws they slash one another's bodies until blood and flesh are dissipated and the bones alone remain. Or else the hell wardens, taking in their hands iron sticks and poles, beat the sinners' bodies from head to foot until they are pulverized like grains of sand. Or else, with a sword of awful sharpness, they cut their victims' bodies in regular pieces as the kitchen worker slices the flesh of fish. And then a cool wind arises, and blowing, returns the sinners to the same state in which they were at the outset. Thereupon they immediately arise and undergo torment identical to that which they had previously suffered. Elsewhere it is said that a voice from the sky above calls to the sentient beings to revive and return to their original state. And again, it is said that the hell wardens beat on the ground with iron pitchforks calling on the sinners to revive. I cannot tell in detail of the other sufferings similar to those already told.[204]

Fifty years of human life is equivalent to one day and night in the realm of the Four Deva Kings,[205] and there life lasts five hundred years. The life in the realm of the Four Deva Kings is the equivalent of one day and night in this hell, and here life lasts five hundred years. People who have taken the life of a living creature fall into this hell. . . .

Outside the four gates of this hell are sixteen separate places that are associated with this hell. The first is called the place of excrement. Here, it is said, there is intensely hot dung of the bitterest of taste, filled with maggots with snouts of indestructible hardness. The sinner here eats the dung, and all the assembled maggots swarm at once for food. They destroy the sinner's skin, devour his flesh, and suck the marrow from his bones. People who at one time in the past killed birds or deer fall into this hell. Second is the place of the turning sword. It is said that iron walls ten yojanas in height surround it and that a terrible and intense fire constantly burns within. The fire possessed by man is like snow when compared to this. With the least of physical contact, the body is broken into pieces the size of mustard seeds. Hot iron pours from above like a heavy rainfall, and in addition, there is a forest of swords, with blades of exceptional keenness, and these swords, too, fall like rain. The multitude of agonies is in such variety that it cannot be borne. Into this place fall those who have killed a living being with concupiscence. Third is the place of the burning vat. It is said that the sinner is seized and placed in an iron vat and boiled as one would cook beans. Those who in the past have taken the life of a living creature, cooked it, and eaten of it fall into this hell. Fourth is the place of many agonies. In this hell there are a trillion different numberless tortures that cannot be explained in detail. Those who at some time in the past bound men with rope, beat men with sticks, drove men and forced them to make long journeys, threw men down steep places, tortured men with smoke, frightened

204. The scriptural authorities that Genshin cites are abbreviated here.

205. The lowest of the six heavens in the world of desire.

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small children, and in many other ways brought suffering to their fellow man, fall into this hell. Fifth is the place of darkness. It is said that here is pitch blackness that burns constantly with a dark flame. A powerful and intense wind blows against the adamantine mountains, causing them to grind against one another and to destroy one another, so that the bodies of the sinners in between are broken into fragments like grains of sand. Then a hot wind arises that cuts like a sharply honed sword. To this place fall those who have covered the mouths and noses of sheep or who have placed turtles between two tiles and crushed them to death. Sixth is the place of joylessness. Here, it is said, is a great fire that burns intensely night and day. Birds, dogs, and foxes with flaming beaks whose intensely evil cries cause the sinner to feel the greatest of fear, come constantly to eat the sinner, whose bones and flesh lie in great confusion. Hard-snouted maggots course about inside the bone and eat the marrow. Those who once blew on shells, beat drums, made frightening sounds, or killed birds and animals fall into this hell. Seventh is the place of extreme agony. It is located beneath a precipitous cliff where a fire of iron burns continuously. People who once killed living creatures in a fit of debauchery descend to this hell. . . .

The Pure Land to Which One Must Aspire

The rewards of the Pure Land are of endless merit. Should one speak of them for a hundred kalpas or even for a thousand kalpas, one would not finish describing them; should one count them or give examples of them, there would still be no way to know of them. At present, ten pleasures in praise of the Pure Land will be explained, and they are like only a single hair floating on the great sea.

First is the pleasure of being welcomed by many saints. Second is the pleasure of the first opening of the lotus.[206] Third is the pleasure of obtaining in one's own body the ubiquitous supernatural powers of a Buddha. Fourth is the pleasure of the realm of the five wonders. Fifth is the pleasure of everlasting enjoyment. Sixth is the pleasure of influencing others and introducing them to Buddhism. Seventh is the pleasure of assembling with the holy family. Eighth is the pleasure of beholding the Buddha and hearing the Law. Ninth is the pleasure of serving the Buddha according to the dictates of one's own heart. Tenth is the pleasure of progressing in the way of Buddhahood.

The Pleasure of Progressing in the Way of Buddhahood

In this present world it is extremely difficult to practice the Way to obtain its fruits. If asked why, it is because those who suffer pain are constantly sorrowful and those who are the recipients of pleasure are always ensnared by it. Both

206. The pleasure of being first born into this land.

Material com direitos autorais

pain and pleasure are far removed from deliverance. Even those who mount the air or submerge themselves in the sea cannot escape the wheel of transmigration. And although there be people who at times are moved to practice good works, it is still hard for them to succeed. The worldly passions erupt from within and evil environment draws from without. . . .

But because of the number of favorable elements in their environment, the beings in this paradise do not retrogress in their advance toward ultimate enlightenment and they make continual progress in the way of Buddhahood. This propitious environment exists because (1) the potency of the Buddha's compassion serves constantly to support them; (2) the radiance of the Buddha shines always and augments the heart of wisdom; (3) the sound of the water fowl, the rustling of the trees and the bells, set in motion by the wind, evoke in their hearts a constant reverence for the Buddha, the Law, and the priesthood; (4) the other bodhisattvas become their companions so that there is no evil influence from without and doubts that arise from within are destroyed; (5) their lives continue for endless kalpas. As long as they live the life of a Buddha and practice and train in the way of Buddhism, they will not be required to experience the interruption of birth and death.

A hymn in the Flower Wreath Sutra[207] says, "Should any living being once look upon the Buddha, then without fail will all obstacles occasioned by past deeds be removed." If this be so, if one sees the Buddha only once, of how much greater benefit is it if one may gaze upon him constantly! By virtue of their environment, beings in this land are in every respect free in their hearts from the consciousness of the self and a desire for possession. In their goings and comings, in their advancing and resting, they are free from the burden of mental effort. In all these beings there exists the heart of great compassion. Without fail they comprehend the ultimate truths, reach Buddhahood, and demonstrate swiftly the supreme enlightenment. . . .

[Translated by Philip Yampolsky]

MOTHER OF MICHITSUNA

Mother of Michitsuna (935–995) became a noted waka poet, and one of her poems was included in the prestigious *One Hundred Poets, One Hundred Poems* (*Hyakunin isshu*), edited by Fujiwara no Teika. Poetry plays a key role in her literary diary, the *Kagerō Diary*, which is partially translated here. The identity of the author's mother remains unclear. The author's father, Fujiwara no Tomoyasu, belonged to the provincial governor class. At the age of nineteen, Mother of Michitsuna received a proposal of marriage from Fujiwara no Kaneie (929–990), who was twenty-six at the time and captain of the Right Guards. As

207. *Kegon-kyō*.

Material com direitos autorais

the son of Fujiwara no Morosuke (908–960), who was minister of the right, he was in a strong position to rise in the political hierarchy, and he eventually reached the powerful position of regent (*kanpaku*). Mother of Michitsuna, however, appears to have enjoyed few of the benefits of Kaneie's rise in rank, largely because she bore him only one child (Michitsuna).

Before his marriage to Mother of Michitsuna, Kaneie already had one son by his first wife, Tokihime, who was his official principal wife (*kita no kata*) in a polygamous marital arrangement typical of the time. Contemporary aristocratic marriage was duolocal, which meant that the man and wife lived in different locations, with the man visiting the woman, who usually lived with her family or by herself with her children. The frequency and duration of the visits reflected the status of the marriage, and the termination of visits was equivalent to divorce. The family system was matrilineal, with the daughter inheriting the house and property and continuing to be supported by her family. Although Tokihime's position as a member of the provincial governor's class was similar to that of Mother of Michitsuna, the main difference was that she provided Kaneie with three sons, including Fujiwara no Michinaga, who later became regent, and two daughters, thus cementing her status as principal wife. Although the author laments the nature of her marriage to Kaneie, the fact that it lasted for sixteen years indicates how highly he valued her as a wife and a poet. The diary reveals that Kaneie had lasting affection for their son, Michitsuna, and must have supported him, since he was eventually able to rise to the status of major counselor.

KAGERŌ DIARY (*KAGERŌ NIKKI*, 974)

The *Kagerō Diary*, which was written from approximately 971 to 974, covers the author's life from 954, when she first encountered her husband-to-be, Fujiwara no Kaneie (929–990), to 974, when her son began a courtship with a woman. Kaneie may have originally asked the author to collect and edit the poetry that he had exchanged with her and others, in order to produce a family poetry collection (*kashū*). This collection of poetry may then have evolved into a literary diary as the author expanded it and recorded her own experiences. Although the work contains much of the poetry exchanged between the author and Kaneie, including poems she wrote on his behalf, Mother of Michitsuna refers to her work as a diary (*nikki*), which contains a day-to-day recording of actual facts and which, in this case, also has an autobiographical dimension. She may have been influenced by diaries written in kanbun by male courtiers, or perhaps she had even read early kana diaries such as the *Tosa Diary* by Ki no Tsurayuki. But more important, she invented a new form of self-expression and psychological exploration that expanded the potential of kana prose writing and influenced subsequent women's writing, including *The Tale of Genji*.

The author was apparently strongly influenced by the monogatari genre. From the condemnation of them in the *Illustration of the Three Jewels* (*Sanbōe-kotoba*), we know

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that these tales were numerous and well circulated. The *Kagerō Diary* often draws on the style of the monogatari, and like the author of the *Sarashina Diary*, Michitsuna's mother views herself through the lens of the stories she has heard and read. Yet it was these very tales that deluded her into thinking that courtship and married life should assume the idealized forms often described in the monogatari. As she notes at the beginning of the *Kagerō Diary*, Michitsuna's mother writes about her life to prove that "the odds and ends of the old tales—of which there are so many . . . are just so much fantasy."

In book 1, which covers fourteen years, the author focuses on her courtship and marriage to Kaneie. At each stage, he appears to fall short of the paradigm found in monogatari. Over the three years described in book 2, the author's resentment builds until it finally climaxes in her decision to retreat to Hannya Temple at Narutaki, on the outskirts of the capital. Having removed herself physically and psychologically from her marriage and from society, Michitsuna's mother faces the decision of either returning to her life in the capital or leaving this secular life forever to become a nun. Faced with the threat of her permanently severing all ties to the secular world, her servants, friends, son, father, and Kaneie all work to persuade the author to return to the capital. Indeed, if she had taken Buddhist vows, this could have jeopardized the position of her son and her father at court.

By book 3, which describes the final three years covered in the diary, the author has gained a new perspective, distancing herself from Kaneie and taking pleasure in her children's relationships, which she supports through her poetry. Although we will never know exactly what sort of person Kaneie was, we find glimpses of happiness in their poetry exchanges, in their common concern for their son, and in adopting the daughter of another of his women. Both the adoption of a daughter and Michitsuna's courtship are presented as if they took place in a monogatari, as the author now began crafting her own tale. The following translation mixes past and present tenses just as they are mixed in the original. Italics indicate interior dialogue.

Book 1

Thus the time has passed and there is one in the world who has lived a vain existence, catching on to neither this nor that. As for her appearance, she can hardly be compared with others, and her intelligence—to say she has some is as good as saying she has none at all—so it is only natural that she has come to such a useless state, so she thinks again and again; it is just that in the course of living, lying down, getting up, dawn to dusk, when she looks at the odds and ends of the old tales—of which there are so many, and they are just so much fantasy—that she thinks perhaps if she were to make a record of a life like her own, really being nobody, it might actually be novel and could even serve to answer, should anyone ask, what is it like, the life of a woman married to a highly placed man? Yet events of the months and years gone by are only vague in memory, and often I have just written what I recall.

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Well, then, for this ultimately disappointing affair, there was, of course, the exchange of love letters; from about the time that he became "a tall tree among oak trees,"[208] it seems that he made his intentions known. An ordinary person would have sent a discreet letter using a serving maid or someone like that as a go-between to make his feelings known, but this man goes right to my father, half-joking, half-serious, hinting at the idea, and even though I told my father that it did not suit me at all, just as if he did not know, one day he sends a retainer riding on a horse to pound on our gate. Who was bringing whose messages, we had not a hint, so there is a big commotion, we were quite perplexed, and accepting the message brings on another commotion. When I look at it, the paper and so on are not what you would expect in such a letter; I had heard from of old that in such a case the hand would be perfect, but the writing in this is so bad that I feel it couldn't be that sort of letter;[209] it is so very strange. The words were:

oto ni nomi	Only to listen
kikeba kanashi na	to your sound alone is sad,
hototogisu	cuckoo bird,
koto katarawamu to	would that I could speak with you,
omou kokoro ari	this is what my heart longs for.

and that was all. When we all discuss it, "How about it? Does it require a reply?" my old mother says, "It does." So feeling obliged, I have someone write:

katarawaru	Toward this village
hito naki sato ni	where there's no one to speak with,
hototogisu	cuckoo bird,
kai nakarubeki	do not flutter a voice that
koe na furushi so	will be to no avail.

With that as a beginning, there were missives one after another.

After months of exchanging poems, Kaneie visits the woman for three consecutive days, signifying the beginning of their marriage. He continues to see her frequently, and she gives birth to a boy, Michitsuna.

Then, around the Ninth Month, just when he had left one day, for no particular reason, I opened a box that happened to be there and saw a letter

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208. A conventional metaphorical expression for the position of captain of the Right Guards, which her husband-to-be, Kaneie, held at that time. From this, we also know that the year is 954. He is twenty-six; she is about nineteen.

209. A letter of proposal.

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obviously intended for another woman. Greatly astonished and thinking I would at least let him know that I had seen it, I write on the letter:

utagawashi	How suspicious!
hoka ni wataseru	I see this letter's tracks lead
fumi mireba	to another's door.
koko ya todaeni	As for here, am I to think
naramu to suramu	your visits will cease?

As I worried, things went much as I feared, and around the end of the Tenth Month, there comes a time when I do not see him for three nights in a row.[210] With an air of unconcern, he excuses himself by saying, "I just wanted to test your feelings by staying away for a while." When evening fell, he says, "There is some business at court that I can't get out of" and leaves; I do not believe him and have a man follow him who came back saying, "It seems that his Lordship went to a certain place on Machi Alley and stayed there." So that is how it was; although I was utterly miserable, I didn't know what to say; it was about two or three days afterward, just before dawn, that there was a knocking on my gate. Thinking that it must be him, I felt wretched, and as I did not have the gate opened, he went off to that other place. The next morning I felt I couldn't just leave things as they were, so I composed:

nagekitsutsu	Sorrow, sorrowing,
hitori nuru yo no	when one sleeps alone, the time
akuru ma ni	until night opens
ika ni hisashiki	into day, how long it is
mono to kawa shiru	perhaps you now know it too?

I wrote this with more than usual care and sent it attached to a chrysanthemum. His response, "I was going to wait until dawn to see what would happen, but just then a messenger from the court came and called me away. It was just as you say":

geni ya geni	Truly, truly so,
fuyu no no naranu	even though the fine wood gate is
maki no to mo	not a winter's night,
osoku akuru wa	to be so late to open,
wabishikarikeri	how miserable it is.

210. Under the circumstances, this could easily mean that he has consummated a marriage with this other woman.

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Well, it got very strange; he carried on quite openly as though there was nothing amiss when one might have expected him to try and hide the affair a little and make excuses about having to work at court and such. He became more and more inconsiderate; there was no end to it.

Kaneie continues to openly visit the woman of Machi Alley. Michitsuna's mother inquires as to whether Tokihime has been receiving visits and discovers that she is being ignored as well. As her relationship to Kaneie becomes increasingly strained, Michitsuna's mother sends him poetry chiding him for his lack of attention.

At the place that was in such ascendancy these days,[211] it was time for the birth of a child, and choosing an auspicious direction in which to remove her for the lying in, he rode out in a single carriage with her, raising a din that could be heard over the entire capital. It was such a racket, so painful to my ears, and did he really have to pass right by my gate? I scarcely felt like myself at all, unable to say anything, and I heard noisy complaints from the lowliest servants to my closest attendants, who were saying things like "Such a thing, it tears one apart. And there are so many other streets he could have taken." I thought that all I wanted to do was die, yet things do not go as we want. From now on, I thought wretchedly, if the best is not to be, then it would be better to break off relations entirely so that I wouldn't have to see him. About three or four days after this, there is a letter from him. Thinking over and over to myself as I read it how awfully cold it was, I noticed this: "Someone has not been feeling well here, so I have not been able to come and visit. However, just yesterday, a safe delivery was accomplished. I haven't wanted to trouble you with the ritual pollution."[212] This surpassed all for being bizarre.[213] I merely sent back, "Message received." When I heard that in response to my servant's inquiries, the messenger had responded, "The household was blessed with a boy," I felt as though my chest were blocked. About three or four days later, he showed up himself as though nothing were the matter. With a look on my face of "what are you doing here?" I did not welcome him in, and finding things very uncomfortable, he left. This happened often.

The Seventh Month arrived and around the time of the annual sumo tournament, two bundles of cloth, one of used and one of new cloth, are delivered. "Please, sew these," is the message. I am appalled; what on earth does he mean by this? Just looking at them, I feel my eyes darken with anger. My mother says, "How regrettable. There must be no one over there who can do these." Some of the more outspoken attendants gathered around and said, "This is really the

211. The Machi Alley woman's place.

212. Because of the associated bleeding, birth was considered polluting.

213. She thought it bizarre that he would communicate with her so casually about the matter.

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limit. Suppose we don't do it and just see what sort of bad things they'll say about us." And so it was decided; we sent the bundles back and as we suspected, we heard he had to divide them up here and there to get them done. He must have found it very cruel; for more than twenty days, there were no inquiries from him.

Kaneie criticizes Michitsuna's mother for her coldness, and they exchange several poems.

. . . [W]e had a good exchange and he came to visit again.

While still lying down[214] and gazing at the flowers of the front garden blooming in rank, multicolored profusion, we said the following. It seems we both had feelings of resentment toward each other. When he breaks the silence with this:

momo kusa ni	The wild-looking hue
midarete miyuru	of these myriad flowers,
hana no iro wa	is it due only
tada shiratsuyu no	to the white dew fallen there,
oku ni ya aruramu	or have their hearts turned cold?

I reply:

mi no aki o	Thinking of autumn,
omoi midaruru	these rank-growing wild flowers,
hana no ue no	were they to speak
tsuyu no kokoro wa	of the heart of the dew
ieba sara ni	upon them, it would be thus.

Saying such things, it was painful between us as always.

As the late rising moon was just about to emerge from behind the mountain ridge, he makes as though to depart. Then, perhaps seeing the expression on my face as I think, *Surely, tonight at least he doesn't have to go,* he says, "Well, if you really think I ought to stay . . . ?" But I didn't feel that desperate, so I said:

ikaga semu	What is there to do?
yama no ha ni dani	Your heart is like the moon
todomarade	that does not linger

214. Very little of the diary is explicitly erotic. However, the inclusion of this phrase about lying down implies that they are still lying in bed after making love, and it charges the next section and particularly the poems exchanged with a muted erotic quality.

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kokoro mo sora ni	at the edge of the mountain,
idemu tsuki oba	but would rise into the sky.

He replies:

hisakata no	You say this heart-moon
sora ni kokoro no	rises into the spreading sky,
izu to ieba	yet it must leave
kage wa soko ni mo	its reflection
todomarubeki	behind in this pond.

and so he stayed.

Kaneie visits Michitsuna's mother only sporadically, and she criticizes him when they exchange poetry. Sometimes this has the desired effect, but at other times he continues to stay away.

Things going along in this fashion, it seems that after the birth of her child, that "splendid" personage of Machi Alley lost favor; in the midst of my feelings of hatred, I had wished to see her live long enough to suffer just as I had; now not only had that come to pass, but to top it all off, was not the child that had been the occasion of all that annoying clatter dead? The lady was the "wild oats"[215] of an unrecognized son of a prince. Needless to say, she was extremely base. Just for a time, she had been able to cause a stir among unknowing people; now suddenly it had come to this—how must she be feeling? When I thought she must be even a little more miserable than I had been, at that moment, I felt as though I could breathe again. Now, I hear they have "swept the pillow" for him at his former place. However, as for here, since he visits as irregularly as before, there are times when I think there is no affection left between us. My little one here has just begun to say a few words. Whenever his father takes leave of us, he always says, "See you soon," and the little one hearing this goes around imitating him.

Michitsuna's mother composes an extended appeal to her husband in a long poem of more than one hundred verses. He responds in the same form, and the exchange has the effect of bringing them closer together. Their relationship continues with its ups and downs for ten years, but Michitsuna's mother never feels completely secure. Her record of a pilgrimage brings book 1 to a close.

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215. In the original, the phrase is "fallen seed" and refers to a child not officially recognized by the father.

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Well then, I have had a fervent desire for so many years; I decide that no matter what I must make a pilgrimage to Hase.[216] I wanted to go in the Eighth Month, but as I cannot always arrange things as I would like, here it is the Ninth Month and I have made up my mind to go. Even though he says, "Next month is the Purification Ceremony in preparation for the Enthronement Rites, and my daughter[217] will be going out from here to serve as acting consort. How about waiting until that is over? Then we could go together," because that is not really my affair, I just decide to leave secretly. However, the day I decided on is inauspicious, so we make a pro forma start a day earlier, staying the night around the neighborhood of Hōshō Temple.[218] Starting from there at dawn, we arrive at Uji village[219] around noon.

Gazing out, I see the surface of the water sparkling in between the trees and find it so moving. Since I want to attract as little attention as possible, I left with very few attendants, and although this is probably lax of me, I cannot help thinking if it were someone other than me, what a big fuss and commotion they would be making.

The carriage is pulled around and the outer curtains drawn up; just the people riding in the back are let down. In the direction of the river, when I roll up the blind and look out, I see the fishing weirs stretched across it. As I have never seen lots of boats plying to and fro like that, it is all so moving and fascinating. When I look back, there are my servants tired from the journey, eating some rather poor-looking limes and pears with their hands; that, too, seems touching. After eating lunch, the carriage is loaded on a boat, and as we go along smoothly from place to place they say, "Here's Nieno Pond" and "Here, Izumi River,"[220] where there are so many birds flocking together; the scene soaks into my heart; it is moving and enchanting. Having come secretly on my own like this, connecting with everything, I feel tears welling up. We cross Izumi River, too.

We stopped for the night at a place called Hashi Temple.[221] It was evening when I got down from the carriage and rested; the first thing to come out of what must have been the temple kitchen was a dish of sliced radish with lime dressing. Traveling like that, all the things I encountered were so curious and wonderful that I still remember them.

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216. Hase Temple is located about a three-day journey up the Hase River valley in present-day Nara Prefecture and was a popular place of pilgrimage, particularly for women, in the Heian period. It still is a thriving religious center.

217. Chōshi (b. 957), Kaneie's eldest daughter by his principal wife, Tokihime. Chōshi was eleven years old at the time of this event.

218. In the southeast corner of Kyoto.

219. South of the capital, on the banks of the Uji River, where many nobles had villas.

220. An old name for the Ōtsu River.

221. A temple located on the north bank of the Ōtsu River just where a bridge crosses it.

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The next morning we cross the river and go on our way; I notice some houses surrounded by brushwood fences and think to myself, *I wonder which one might be the house mentioned in the* Kamo Tale; *how moving it is*.

That day, too, we stayed at some kind of temple, the next day at a place called Tsubaichi,[222] a market town. The next morning, when the threads of frost are still white on the ground, many people are both coming and going, their legs wrapped in cloth leggings, all in various states raising a lively commotion. The shutters are open at the place where we are staying, and while I am waiting for the wash water to be warmed, I look out and see all these people crossing paths; I think to myself that they must all have their own concerns and worries that would bring them on a pilgrimage like this.

A little while later, a fellow arrives holding a letter up. He stands there and says something like "A letter from his lordship." I look at it. It said:

> I've been worrying yesterday and today. Why did you run off like that? You went with so few attendants; are you all right? I seem to remember you said you would go on retreat for three days. Let me know what day you are coming back. At least I could come and meet you.

In reply, I wrote:

> It seems that we have arrived uneventfully at this place, Tsubaichi. However, taking this opportunity, I am thinking of going from here even deeper into the mountains, so I cannot tell you exactly the date of our return.

Meanwhile my attendants, talking among themselves, say such things as "Being on retreat for even three days is bad enough. . . . " Having heard all this, the messenger returned.

We left from there, and as we go along, even though the path is nothing to speak of, it still gives one the feeling of being deep in the mountains, and the sound of the water is very affecting. Those famed cedars are living, even now piercing the sky; all kinds of colors of tree leaves can be seen. From among many stones, the water gurgles forth. Seeing this scene struck by the light of the setting sun, tears pour forth endlessly. The path to here had not been so especially charming. There were as yet no red autumn leaves; the flowers were all gone; one could only see withered pampas grass. Yet, here, the feeling is special, when I look out, rolling up the outer blind, pushing aside the inner

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222. The staging area for pilgrimages to Hase Temple, located in the present-day Kanaya District of Sakurai City. Pilgrims usually stayed overnight here before making the final journey to the temple.

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blind, the color of this well-worn robe is quite different. When I pull the train of lavender gauze around me, the ties cross over my lap; how well their color complements the burnt umber of this robe, how enchanting I find it all. The beggars with their pots and bowls set on the ground before them, how sad they seem. Feeling so close to the poor and lowly, entering the temple precincts is less uplifting than I expected.

In the temple hall, unable to sleep, having nothing else to do, I listen intently to the noises outside and hear a blind person, who does not seem all that poorly off, pouring forth in a loud voice all his troubles without any thought that others might hear; moved by this, my tears just pour down.

On the way back to the capital, Kaneie comes to meet her party at Uji and spends a day with her there. Thus, her pilgrimage ends with a feeling of celebration that, it would appear, puts the diarist in a better frame of mind to participate in the preparations for presenting Kaneie's daughter at the Purification Ceremony.

The day after we returned was very close to the Purification Ceremony. "Now, I would like you to do such and such," came his requests. "Yes, and how should it be done?" said I, getting caught up in the bustle. The day of the event, the ceremonial carriages followed one after another. The women and male attendants followed along, too; everything was so bright and colorful, I almost felt as though I was a part of the parade myself, all so very stylish. The next month came the Enthronement Rites, and the inspection of everything to make sure it was perfect was most time-consuming. I, too, was busy with preparing to attend the ceremony, and then it was the end of the month, which was the end of the year, and so we all got very busy all over again.

Thus, the years and months have piled up. As I lament that this has not been the life I wanted, even voices of well-wishers mingled with the birds singing anew bring no happiness; all the more I sense how fleeting everything is; the feeling arises—am I, is the world, here or not—this could be called the diary of a mayfly or the shimmering heat on a summer's day.[223]

Book 2

. . . While I was thinking thoughts like these, the last day of the year and then the middle of spring arrived. As for him, it is rumored how he is in a rush to move, tomorrow, no tonight, into that splendid residence on which he has

223. The word in the original, *kagerō*, means both "mayfly," a symbol for a fleeting, ephemeral life, and "the shimmering of heat waves," a symbol for insubstantiality. Thus as a pun it signifies indeterminacy both on the temporal plane and in the material world. The title for the diary is taken from this passage.

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lavished such care;[224] as for me, just as I thought, I am to remain where I am and I suppose that's best. Such being the case, I have been consoling myself with thoughts of *you've learned from bitter experience*, and so on, when I get caught up in the preparations for the archery contest to be held around the tenth of the Third Month at the palace. My young one has been chosen to participate as a member of the "after" team. Since it has been declared that the winning team will present a dance, these days everything else is forgotten in the rush to attend to this. Every day, the house resounds with the sound of music for the dance practice. Going off for archery practice, he comes back with prizes won for his skill. Looking on, I feel terribly pleased.

The tenth day arrived. Today, they hold a sort of dress rehearsal here. The dance master, Ō no Yoshimochi, receives a lot of presents from the lady attendants. All the other participants to a man take off robes for him. Announcing, "His lordship is observing abstinence," nonetheless all his retainers come. In the evening, just as the rehearsal is coming to an end, Yoshimochi comes out and dances the "Butterfly" piece; afterward someone removes a saffron singlet and bestows it on him. How well this fit the occasion. Then again on the twelfth day, they say, "We have to gather the whole of the 'after' team together for dance and archery practice, but it is inconvenient to hold it here because there is no archery practice ground." So it is held with great to-do over at his residence. I hear that "practically all the high-ranking courtiers are attending; it seems the dance master Yoshimochi will be buried in congratulatory robes." For my part, as I wonder and worry, *how is it going? how is it going?* the night grows late, and my son returns with a great many people in train. Then in a little bit, he himself arrives and, not caring whether people might think it strange, comes right into my room, "This one danced so charmingly, it will be the talk of the court. It was so touching, everyone was in tears. I'm still observing abstinence tomorrow and the next day, how very trying. But I will come while it is still early on the fifteenth and attend to all the details." Having said these things, he left, but I didn't feel my usual chagrin; I felt so happy; there was no limit to my joy.

The day arrives; he comes early; a lot of people gather to attend to the dance costumes; there is great excitement, seeing people off, praying for the success of my son's bow. Sometime before, my husband had said, "'The 'after' team is bound to lose. They picked some rather odd archers." When I heard such things, I wondered if all the effort he had put into the dance would come to naught, and as I worried about what was going to happen, the day turned to night. Because the moon was very bright, I did not even have the outer shutters lowered; as I fervently prayed, first one, then another attendant runs in to tell

224. The residence that has been under construction at Higashi sanjō. Kaneie moves into this primary residence along with Tokihime.

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the tale of the event. "He has taken this many shots," "It seems our young lord's opponent is the captain of the Right Guards." "He shot with all his might and defeated his opponent." Moved by each report, *yes, yes, such joy and happiness, there is nothing like it*. Then another messenger comes in with the news, "While the 'after' team was expected to lose, with our young lord's arrows hitting the mark, the match ended in a tie." Since it was a tie, the "before" team led the dancing with a piece entitled "King Ryō." The dancer was my nephew, who is about the same age as my son. When they all had been learning their dances, he had come here to watch and my son had gone there, so they had both taken an interest in each other's dancing. Then, my son danced next, and as a result of the general appreciation for his performance, it seems the emperor bestowed a robe on him. Directly, they returned from the palace with the young "King Ryō" also riding on behind. He proceeded to tell me what had gone on, how proud his son had made him, how all the high-ranking courtiers had been so enchanted they had cried, and so on, repeating the story over and over in tears himself as he told it. He called for the archery master and, when he came, loaded him up with all kinds of gifts. Forgetting that I had ever been sad, I experienced a happiness beyond comparison. For about two or three days afterward, friends and acquaintances, even some priests, came one after another to congratulate us on the young lord's success. Listening to their words, I felt so strangely happy.

Kaneie fails to visit or to write. Michitsuna's mother seeks solace in the poetry she writes for herself and her friends.

. . . [W]hile I was passing my days in brooding, a letter arrived from him. "I have sent letters but you have not responded; since you have seemed out of sorts, it seemed best to stay away. However, I am thinking of coming today" was the sort of thing it appeared to be. As this and that attendant urged me to respond, I did, and evening fell by the time I had written it. Before one would have thought my answer could have reached him, he appeared. Since my attendants said such things as "He may have had his reasons for staying away. Please look as though you're not upset," I did my best to change my feelings. "It's because I've been in a period of mourning that I have been absent;[225] I have no intention of ceasing my visits entirely. Really, I find your sulking strange." Since he said these things so blithely and unfeelingly, I felt repulsed.

The next morning, he says, "As there are things I simply must attend to . . . I'll come soon either tomorrow or the day after." I do not think it is really true,

225. The period of mourning for his uncle, Fujiwara no Saneyori, who had held the key position of regent. It is also revealed later in the diary that Kaneie used the period of mourning to start an affair with one of his uncle's mistresses.

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yet it is natural for me to hope he might have a change of heart—the thought occurs to me, what if this were to be the last time I would ever see him—then, little by little, the number of days he does not come increases. So it is coming to pass as I thought; I become even sadder than ever.

Michitsuna's mother considers becoming a nun, but she worries about the repercussions it might have on her son. Although Kaneie visits her occasionally, it seems more out of duty than desire.

The more I think about this situation, the stranger it seems. I have not heard that he has shifted his affections to a new woman, but suddenly just as I was thinking about this, I hear from someone who knows of my affairs, "There are the serving ladies of his late uncle, the minister of the Ono Palace; he has likely become infatuated with one of them. There is one woman, Ōmi,[226] who has apparently been acting strangely, and it seems she is a rather licentious woman. He wouldn't want her to know that he visits here, so he has probably cut off relations here in preparation for winning her." Another person listening to this, says, "For heaven's sake, he didn't have to do that. If she is really as easy a woman as one hears, why should he have to go to all the trouble of scheming like that?" So went the conversation. Someone else suggested, "If it is not Ōmi, then it is one of the late emperor's daughters."[227] And so on, it might be this one, it might be that one; it is just so very strange. I am urged by my attendants, "It is as though all you can do is stare helplessly at the setting sun. Why not go off on a pilgrimage somewhere?" It's true, these days, I can think of nothing else: in the morning, I talk about it; at night, I grieve about it. Yes, if that is the way it is, even though this is the season of terrible heat, isn't it true, I can't just stay as I am; I make up my mind to go to Ishiyama Temple[228] around the tenth of the month.

As I intend to go secretly, I don't even let my own sister know, and gathering my courage, I run out of the house just at the time I thought it might be growing light. But around the area of the Kamo River—how they found out about it, I don't know—some people from the household catch up with me. Even though

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226. The woman is assumed to be the daughter of Fujiwara no Kuniaki, at one time the governor of Ōmi, hence her name. She was put into service with Kaneie's uncle, Saneyori, when Saneyori was seventy. After Saneyori died, it seems Kaneie did begin an affair with her. A couple of years later she bore Kaneie a daughter, Suishi, who eventually was made consort to Emperor Sanjō (r. 1011–1016). From humble beginnings, then, through this liaison with Kaneie, Ōmi was able to rise to the high position of mother of an imperial consort.

227. Some sixteen years later, historical records reveal a brief marriage between Kaneie and Emperor Murakami's third daughter, Princess Hōshi. She was then at the advanced age of thirty-nine. It is conceivable that casual relations between them might have begun at this time, but it remains uncertain.

228. On the shore of Lake Biwa, a popular pilgrimage site for women of the Heian period.

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it is quite bright by the light of the remaining moon at dawn, we do not meet another soul. On the riverbank, I am told, and can see, that there are corpses lying around, but I am not even afraid. When we have gone as far as Awatayama, I am in such discomfort, we stop to rest for a bit. I don't understand what is happening to me; tears just pour down. When I think someone might be coming, I compose my tearful face as though nothing has happened, and we just keep going at a run.

At Yamashina, it becomes completely light; I feel very exposed and hardly know myself. Since my attendants, having placed themselves ahead and behind, are walking along with a hangdog air, the people we meet coming toward us or walking alongside us think us suspicious and noisily whisper to one another; how wretched it makes me feel.

Finally, we get as far as Running Well where it is suggested we eat our box lunches. They set up a curtain; we have just started eating, when some outriders come up making an alarming amount of noise. What are we to do? Who might this be? If any of their attendants were to recognize any of my attendants, how awful it would be. Just as I was thinking that, a large number of mounted guardsmen with a caravan of two or three carriages came up, making a big commotion. Someone says, "It's the carriage of the governor of Wakasa." They pass by without stopping, and I feel relieved. *How poignant, I think to myself; just like someone of that status to drive along with great pride and abandon, while back in the capital, morning to dusk, he has been bowing and scraping. Just so, he would drive along with a great commotion the moment he is out of the city limits.* It occasions heartrending feelings.[229] Some straggling, lower-ranking servants from that procession, such as those assigned to leading the oxen and some others, come close to my curtain and begin to noisily wash themselves. I find their behavior so rude, it is outrageous. Finally, when one of my attendants says, "Hey, get away from there," the servants respond with, "Don't you know, everybody coming and going stops here. Who are you to scold us?" Watching this exchange, how could I ever describe my feelings.

After that procession had passed by, we set off ourselves and passed the checkpoint. I arrived at Uchiide Beach in a half-dead state. The people who had gone on ahead had fashioned out of some reeds a kind of roof for a boat. Barely conscious, I crawled into the boat, and now we set out rowing to cover a vast distance. As for my state of mind, I felt so awfully sad, so anguished, so wretched, it was unmatched by anything I had ever experienced before.

Michitsuna's mother arrives at Ishiyama Temple and is moved by the natural surroundings. She wishes she could take the tonsure, but she still feels a strong tie to her son. She

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229. The governor of Wakasa is a provincial governor like her own father, and it would seem that her sad feelings are occasioned by realizing that her father must feel much the same as she imagines this man does.

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returns home to her servants, who have been waiting anxiously. Kaneie visits, but their relations are strained.

Today from about noon on, the rain pattered down, sadly falling on and on. So much for thoughts of, I wonder if he'll come. . . . When I think of the old days, it must not have been love but just his basic lustful nature that brought him to me, not letting wind or rain stop him; now when I think about it, since there was never a time when I felt really secure, my expectations have been exaggerated—ah—to think he wouldn't let wind or rain get in his way, that's no longer something I can expect, and so I spend the day gazing out, sunk in brooding thoughts.

With the sound of the rain continuing to patter, it became time to light the lamps. These days, there is a man who visits the south apartment.[230] When I hear his footsteps, I think, so, he has come. How touching and charming of him to have come on such a night, and right alongside that feeling comes boiling up a swirl of emotion; when I speak out, one of my attendants who has known me for years, faces me and says, "It is sad, in the old days, even rain and wind worse than this would not have kept him away." The moment she says this, I feel hot tears rolling down:

omoiseku	I stifle these thoughts;
mune no homura wa	the flames in my breast
tsuranakute	do not appear,
namida o wakasu	they just go ahead
mono ni zarikeru	and boil these tears.

Repeating this over and over to myself, I stayed up all night in a place away from my bed.

The new year arrives, and Kaneie fails to make his expected visit. Instead, he passes by her gate twice, on route to another location. When he finally does visit, she rejects his advances. Upset and embarrassed by his lack of attention, Michitsuna's mother decides she will go on retreat.

On the first day of the Fourth Month, I called my son from the other house, "I am to start a long fast. I have been told to have you accompany me." Saying this, I began. From the first, I had not intended to have my devotions be an elaborate thing; I just burned some incense in an earthenware container, placed it on top of an armrest, and, leaning over it, intoned prayers to the Buddha. The sense of my prayers was just this: *I have become a person of no happiness. Thinking how miserable it was that over the years my heart has never known any*

230. This is the apartment presumably of her sister.

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peace and now it has come to this awful turn in our marriage, please let me quickly perfect my practice and achieve enlightenment. Performing my devotions in this manner, the tears trickled down. Ah, I remember one time when I heard that at that time there was hardly a woman without a rosary dangling from her wrist and a sutra in her hand, I had said, "What a miserable sight they must be; that sort of woman is bound to lose her husband." Now where had it gone, that desire to criticize? From dawn to dusk, with unsettled heart, not letting up for a minute, even though I had no sense of getting anywhere, I poured myself into the practice. Ah, but the thought came again and again—*how strange I must look to people who had heard me condemn other women in the same situation, "And when she had such a fragile marriage herself, how could she say such things?"* There was not a time when that thought came to mind that the tears did not well up. Before the eyes of others, I felt so ashamed to present such a miserable appearance; I passed each day from dawn till dusk constantly repressing tears.

Michitsuna's mother returns home and continues practicing ascetic activities. Soon she plans another retreat, this time to Hannya Temple in Narutaki. Kaneie tries to detain her, but she departs along with Michitsuna before he is able to act.

The mountain path was not anything particular to speak about—*ah—I can only think of the times in the past when just the two of us traveled this road together; there was that time when I was ill, we were here around three or four days; yes, it was around this time of the year; he didn't even go to serve at court, together we were hidden from the world*; thinking about this and other things, I go along the long path, tears pouring down. I am accompanied by only three attendants.

I get down first at the monastery's living quarters; when I look around, I see some peonies surrounded by a brushwood fence among some other luxuriantly growing plants whose name I do not know; they are in such a pitiful state, their petals all fallen and scattered; the old poem, "flowers have only one season," comes to mind, and repeating it to myself, I become very sad.

Worried that she might choose to become a nun this time, Kaneie follows her to the temple and asks her to return home. Michitsuna is forced to be the unhappy messenger between his parents. Despite pressure from her son and her servants, Michitsuna's mother resists Kaneie's entreaties and remains in retreat. As she continues her religious austerities, she receives visits from relatives and letters of concern.

The day after that, someone who would be considered a distant relative came to visit. She brought a lot of prepared food with her. First, she says, "Why have you done this? What do you intend to do? If you don't have a really good reason, then this is a disagreeable thing to have done." To which I reply by telling her

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in bits and pieces just how I had been feeling and what had happened to me. She ends up saying that she quite understood and breaks into tears herself. Around twilight, with the evening cicadas chattering away, saying the sad things one would say on such an occasion, she departs just as the vesper bells are over. Since she is a person of deep feeling, I imagined how truly sad she must have felt as she left. Then what should arrive from her the next day but a load of things that one needs for a long stay away from home. I was deeply moved and at a loss for words. She wrote many things, among them this: "I barely noticed anything on the road home. I imagined you as you made your way through the tall trees of the mountain path; how very touching:

yo no naka no	If all things were right
yo no naka naraba	with you and yours in the world,
natsugusa no	I would not have come
shigeki yamabe mo	visiting you on that mountainside
tazunezaramashi	grown rank with summer grass.

Having to leave you behind, thinking of you on the way home, I could barely see for tears and nearly lost my way. My dear one, you seem driven to distraction with the deep sorrow you bear:

yo no naka wa	Things in the world[231]
omoi no hoka ni	have not gone as one would think,
Narutaki no	and gone you have to
fukaki yamaji o	Narutaki, who taught you
tare shirasekemu	the road through the deep mountains?"

She wrote down every little thing just as though she were talking to me in person. She mentions Narutaki because that is the name of the river that flows in front of here. In my reply as well, I told her all that was in my heart. "I have been thinking a lot about what you asked when you visited here, why am I doing this?

mono o omoi	When you came to gauge
fukasa kurabe ni	the depth of my sorrowful thoughts,
kite mireba	you did surely see
matsu no shigeri mo	the rank growth of summer's green
mono maranaku ni	was nothing in comparison.

231. In Heian vocabulary, *yo no naka* (things in the world) can have the meaning of "marriage."

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While I still have no idea when I shall return and while I am troubled when I think about what you said:

mi hitotsu no	All by myself
kaku Narutaki o	thus having come to visit
tazunureba	this Narutaki,
sara ni kaeranu	I see the water that will
mizu mo suminikeri	never return runs clear too.

Thus, I feel I have a good example to follow."

Her father comes to try and persuade her to return. She realizes that she must return sooner or later but finds it difficult to decide to leave. Then a day or two later, the decision is made for her.

Just "bobbing like a float on a fisherman's line," my thoughts were all awry; there was a commotion, someone arrived. *It must be him,* I thought, and felt suddenly lost and confused. This time, with no hesitation at all, he marched directly in. Just as he entered, I drew a rather poor screen in front of me; while it hid a bit of me, it really was quite useless. Seeing me there, with a pile of incense lit, a rosary hanging from my hands, and a sutra laid out, he said, "How frightening. I had no idea it was like this. I feel that I can hardly approach you. I have come thinking that you might be ready to leave here, but now it seems as though it would almost be a sin to move you. How about it, young lord: What do you think about just staying on like this?"

He replied, looking down, "I hate the idea but what's to be done about it?" "How sad," he exclaimed, "If that is how it is, one way or another, it is for you to decide. If she will leave, then let's have the carriage drawn up." Before he had finished saying this, my son leaped up and just began to gather all the things scattered around, wrapping them up, stuffing into bags the things that needed packing and stowing them all away in the carriage. Then he took down the curtains and folded up other things, roughly packing them all away. I sat there dazed, barely aware of who I was. While all this was happening, he looked on, exchanging glances with my son, seeming very much amused. "Well, since things are done, it seems that you should come away now. Let the Buddha know your intentions. I believe that is the usual custom." Thus he turned the scene into a noisy farce. I was incapable of saying a word; though tears welled up, I held myself together. It seemed to take forever to bring the carriage up. Since he had arrived in the late afternoon, it was now almost time to light the lamps. As I sat there impassively, not moving, he finally said to my son, "All right, all right, I'm going. I leave it up to you." And when he had gone out, my son, on the verge of tears himself, said, "Come on now," and took me by the hand. I left feeling as though it was useless to say anything further; it was as though it was happening to somebody else.

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As the carriage pulled out through the main gate, he got in. All the way back, he found all sorts of things to laugh at, whereas I sat wondering whether this was a dream, unable to say anything at all. My sister, who had been with me, was riding in the same carriage with us—since it was dark, she thought it would be all right—she responded to his jokes from time to time. Because it was a long way, it was late at night when we arrived. Back in the capital, since someone had informed the household of his going to fetch me that day, they had had the good sense to clean the house and open the gate. Still not feeling quite myself, I got down from the carriage.

As I was not feeling well, I placed a screen of state between us and lay down in a place apart, at which point one of my household servants pops out and comes next to me. "I was going to gather the seeds from the maiden pinks, but they withered up; even the roots are gone. And that black bamboo, one clump fell over, but I had it put to right . . . " and so on. As I feel that this is not really the time for her to be talking about this sort of thing, I make no response, but he, who I had thought might be sleeping, had been listening very carefully to all this, and he calls over to my sister who was just on the other side of the partition. "Would you listen to that. It's quite something. There she is turning her back on the world, leaving her household behind, seeking enlightenment, but just now when you hear her servant talking to her, you'd think the maiden flowers were her own daughters, and the black bamboo's back on its feet, my, my, what worldly concerns." Hearing this, my sister bursts out laughing. I, too, think it is terribly funny, but I do not let even the merest hint of a smile show.

After this episode, their relationship continues but never regains the intimacy of the best of former times.

Since there was someone informing me that he was going every night to that place that was taboo to me,[232] I hardly passed the time with my heart at ease. Nevertheless, the days and the months passed, and here it was, the last day of the year, the time to chase out devils; I was terribly startled as both the adults and the children of the household rushed around shouting, "Devils out! Devils out!" I just listened and watched quietly. It seemed to me that this was the sort of thing that only households where everything was going well would want to perform. Someone said, "It is snowing heavily." As the year ended, I felt I had no attachments left to anything.

Book 3

In this way, another new year dawns; it seems that it is the third year of Tenroku. Feeling that my gloom and pain have eased, I help dress our young lord and

232. Presumably Ōmi's place. She is speaking figuratively when she says it is taboo to her.

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send him on his way to court. As I watch him run down into the garden and straightaway give a ceremonial bow, he looks so terribly splendid that I want to cry. I think, *shall I hold a sutra-reading service tonight?* But then my period is likely to come.[233] That is the sort of thing people usually consider inauspicious, and I wonder in my own heart once more how will things turn out for me. However, this year, having resolved firmly that regardless of whether he might be the most annoying person in the world, I will not regret anything; my heart is very much at peace.

Michitsuna's mother maintains her resolution not to pine for Kaneie and is able to focus on other concerns.

Since I had only one son,[234] over the years I had made pilgrimages here and there making this one fervent prayer, but now I am reaching an age when it will be very difficult.[235] For the last few months the thought has occurred to me, *how about taking in a girl from a good family; I could take care of her, she could be a good friend for my only son, and be there for me in my old age;* I have discussed the idea with this and that person. One person said, "I have heard that a very beautiful little girl was born to the daughter of the late Genji counselor Kanetada, with whom your husband once had an affair. If it's all the same to you, why don't you ask about her? I think the mother is now living at the foot of the mountains in Shiga, being supported by her elder brother, who is a monk." Upon hearing that person speak, it came back to me, "That's right. There was something like that. The family is descended from the late retired emperor Yōzei, isn't it? When her father, the counselor, had died and she was still in mourning, since he was never one to pass up an opportunity like that, there was this and that exchange between them, and it did end up in an affair. On his part, at first, it was just his usual sort of amusement; on her part, since the household was not a fashionable one and she was not very young, she probably didn't expect it to amount to anything. Nonetheless, I believe that around the time she responded to his letters, he himself went to see her about

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233. The service would take a day or two, but if her period were to start, she would be ritually unclean and have to stop the observance. Since menstruation was considered a defilement, it seems like an inauspicious state in which to begin the new year.

234. Having only one child put a woman of that period in a precarious position. If a woman other than an imperial consort had only one child, it was better for her to have a daughter. The main Fujiwara clan was always in need of beautiful, talented daughters to marry into the imperial family. A daughter could always marry "up" the social scale, whereas a son's future was tied more closely to the combined statuses of his mother and father. Furthermore, in an ironic reversal of the situation later in Japan, sons were to some extent lost to their families because they married "out," whereas daughters stayed with their mothers.

235. She is approximately thirty-seven years old at this time and therefore reaching the end of her childbearing years.

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two times. Now what was it? There was something about his returning with just a singlet of hers. There were quite a few incidents, but I've forgotten them. Now what was the poem he sent to her—

seki koete	The barrier crossed,
tabine naritsuru	having slept a traveler's sleep
kusa makura	on a pillow of grass,
karisome ni hata	yet, I do not think of it
omouenu kana	as a transient affair.

was I believe what he sent; since it was what it was, her reply was not terribly distinguished either:

obotsukana	In bewilderment,
ware nimo aranu	feeling that it was not me
kusa makura	on a pillow of grass,
mada koso shirane	never before had I known
kakaru tabine wa	such a traveler's sleep.

was what she wrote. 'It's a little strange that she used the phrase "traveler's sleep" too.' I remember us laughing about that together. After that, I didn't really hear very much about her, but I seem to remember she replied like this to some letter:

okisouru	Dampened through and through
tsuyu ni yona yona	as night after night my tears
nurekoshi wa	fall with the dew,
omoi no naka ni	even in the flames of longing
kawaku sode kawa	how are these sleeves to dry?

And so on, like that, they grew further apart, and it ended as a fleeting affair, but afterward I heard from his lordship, 'A girl was born at that place I used to visit. She says it is mine. It may well be. Wouldn't it be good to bring the child here and place it with you?' It must be the same child. I shall do it," and thus, I came to decide. When I made inquiries through an intermediary, I heard that the young person, unknown to her father, was about twelve or thirteen years old. Apparently with only this daughter for a companion, the mother had come to live in the eastern foothills of Shiga; looking on the lake in front and the Shiga Mountains behind, dawn to dusk, she was living an inexpressibly forlorn existence. When I heard this—as it is said, pinching myself to know another's pain—my first thought was, *there in Naniwa, living that way, she must have feelings left in her heart, she must have words left to say.*

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Now her half brother is a monk in the capital, and the person who brought up the idea in the first place is his acquaintance, so I had her go as an intermediary to bring him to discuss the idea. He said, "What could be the problem? At least in my opinion, it is a wonderful idea. Why, there she is trying to take care of her daughter, but the world has proved to be such an uncertain place for her, I understand she is even thinking of becoming a nun, and that is why she moved a few months ago to that lonely place." With that, the very next day, he crossed over the mountain and visited them. His sister apparently found it strange behavior by a half brother who had never seemed very concerned about her. When she asked, "What has brought you here?" he chatted with her about one thing and another for a while and then brought up the plan. At first, saying neither this nor that—one wonders what she really thought—she just cried and cried pitifully. Then she somehow finally pulled herself together to say, "I have felt this was the end for me, and although it has been very painful to have dragged such a child to such a place as this, what else was I to do? If some way or another there might be something else for her, I beg you to do as you think best." So he returned the next day and reported what had happened. Amazingly it had gone as I hoped. Some karmic fate must have been at work. I was very moved. When he said, "Well then, would your ladyship please grace her with a letter?" I replied, "Of course," and composed this, "Since over the years I have heard about you but have never written to you before, I wonder how you could be anything other than bewildered and questioning who I am. Although you must find this very strange indeed, it seems that upon hearing from his reverence[236] the hapless sorrow I relayed to him, you have deigned to make a favorable reply. I can only say that I am writing to you now with great joy. My request must seem very callous, but since I heard that you are thinking of becoming a nun, I thought you might be willing to give up even such a beloved child." This was dispatched, and there was a reply the next day. With such phrases as "I am happy," she gave her consent with goodwill. In this letter, she also described the gist of her conversations with his reverence. Yet at the same time, imagining her feelings, I felt very sad indeed. She wrote on and on, myriad things, and then at the end, "Enveloped in a mist of tears, I cannot tell what my brush writes; it feels strange." I felt that truly it must have been so for her.

After that, with the exchange of only about two letters, the matter was decided and his reverence went to bring the girl to the capital. It seems she was to travel all alone; thinking of that, I felt sad. It could not have been easy for the mother to let her go like that. She just must have in the back of her mind the thought that the father might now take care of his daughter. Even though one might hope for that, having her with me did not necessarily mean he would

236. That is, her half brother.

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look after her as his own, and if it did not work out, then how very regrettable it would be. Although I felt worried by such thoughts, having made this promise, it was not as though I could change my mind now. "As the nineteenth of this month is an auspicious day . . . ," so it has been decided. I send a party out from here to greet her. Not wanting to attract a lot of attention, I just send a fresh-looking rattan carriage with four mounted attendants and a few extra servants. Our young lord gets in quickly, and I have the person who had first spoken of the girl to me ride in back.

Today, most unusually, there has been news from him. I instruct my son, "I fear he is on his way. It would not be good for you to run into each other. Go as quickly as you can. Keep her out of sight for a while. We will just have to see how everything goes." This was to no avail, for my husband arrived early, and before anything could be done, just a few moments afterward, the welcoming party pulled in. When he asked, "Where has our young lord been?" I tried to put him off by saying one thing or another. However, since he seemed to suspect that something like this was going to happen today, I finally told him. "Since I am so forlorn, I have taken in a child that someone else seems to have abandoned." Whereupon he said, "Well, let's see it. Whose child is it? Since I've gotten old, you've probably sought yourself out a young man, and now you're going to dismiss me." This was most amusing; I ask him, "Well, shall I show her to you? Would you make her your own child?" "That would be fine. Please bring her out. Come on, come on." And as I was quite curious myself, I called her out.

She seemed very small for her age; in fact, she looked much like a child. Calling her closer, he said, "Stand up," and when she did we could see that she stood only about four feet high. It seemed that her hair was a little thin, tapering toward the ends and about four inches shorter than her height. She seemed quite charming; her hairline was lovely and her form elegant. Looking at her, he said, "Ah, how charming she is. Whose child is this? Come on, tell me." Thus pressed and thinking after all it was not likely to be an embarrassment, I may as well reveal it, I said, "Well then, do you really find her charming? Shall I tell you?" He pressed me even further. "What a fuss you make. Can't you tell, she is your very own child." He reacted with great surprise, "What? How? From where?" But since I didn't reply right away, he said, "I wonder, could she be the child I was told of at that place?" When I replied, "It would seem so," he went on, "How astonishing. I knew her mother must be living in some miserable state somewhere. But not to have seen the child until she was as old as this . . . " He broke into tears. As for the child herself, whatever she might be thinking, she too was looking down and crying. Those looking on found it so touching, just like something out of an old tale, and everyone cried. I couldn't help crying, bringing my sleeve to my eyes many times. He said, "Well, I never, out of the blue like this, just when I was thinking of not coming here anymore, now to have such a person here—I'll just have to take you home

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with me." So he joked, until quite late at night; we spent our time laughing and crying by turns, and then we all slept.

The next morning, when he was about to return, he called her to come out, looked at her, and seemed to find her so charming. "I'll take you with me right now. When the carriages come up, let's get in together." Then breaking out into laughter, he left. After that, when he wrote letters, he always asked, "How is the little one?" and the letters came often.

Nonetheless, Kaneie's visits dwindle, and she no longer expects him to come. Michitsuna's mother is resigned to her tenuous relationship with Kaneie, but she worries about her own future and that of her son.

I realize how everything has changed. While I have been somewhat out of touch with reality, my dwelling place has fallen more and more into disrepair. As I don't really have enough people to keep it up, I am giving it up to someone else, and my father, on whom I depend, has decided that I should live in one of his houses. So today or the next day, I am to move to the area around Nakagawa at Hirohata.[237] That such a thing might happen I have hinted to him before on several occasions, but now, since it is to be today, I thought I had better inform him. Although I sent the message, "I have something to tell you," the response was, "Due to an abstinence, his lordship is not to be disturbed." As he seems so little concerned, I thought, *why bother*, and moved without telling him.

The focus of the diary shifts to the affairs of both her son and her adopted daughter. Michitsuna has been invited to act as one of the dancers at the Special Secondary Kamo Festival. Kaneie pays a rare visit to send his son off to the festival. She herself attends the festival parade.

On the day of the festival, no matter what, I had to go and have a look. As I set out, I noticed on the north side of the street an unremarkable palmwork carriage parked with its blinds, in both back and front, pulled down. Sleeves of purple brocade layered over lustrous red silk spilled out from underneath the bamboo blind in front. Just as I was looking at this and thinking it must be a woman's carriage, a man of the sixth rank with a sword at his waist approached from the gate of the house behind the carriage and, with great dignity, knelt

237. The decision to change residences is a signal that she has somehow accepted that the marriage, at least as a regular visiting arrangement, is over. There was no formal way to end marriage in the Heian period. The husband simply stopped visiting, but the stopping itself was often sporadic.

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with one knee on the ground to say something. With some surprise, when I looked more closely, I could see that beside the carriage that man had come out of, there were all sorts of men in costumes of red and black standing there all crammed together, so many I couldn't count them all. One of my attendants said, "If one looks carefully, there are some men there we have seen before."[238] Things had got under way a little earlier than usual. The high nobility and their followers as well, all seemed to notice him; they stopped and parked their carriages in the same place with the fronts of their carriages facing his. As for the one I care deeply about,[239] he and his attendants too looked magnificent, even though they had had little time to prepare. When the high nobility offered him snacks with their own hands and spoke to him, I felt proud. My old-fashioned father, who was not permitted to be in the audience, was mingling among the musicians with blossom-festooned caps. When he was sought out in the crowd and offered a cup of saké brought from the other house, just for that moment, I felt content.[240]

[Introduction by Christina Laffin and translation by Sonja Arntzen]

SEI SHŌNAGON

Sei Shōnagon (b. 965?) was the daughter of Kiyohara no Motosuke, a noted waka poet and one of the editors of the *Gosenshū*, the second imperial waka anthology. (The Sei in Sei Shōnagon's name comes from the Sino-Japanese reading for the Kiyo in Kiyohara.) Around 981, Sei Shōnagon married Tachibana no Norimitsu, the first son of the noted Tachibana family, but after she bore him a child the next year, they were separated.

In 990 Fujiwara no Kaneie, the husband of the author of the *Kagerō Diary*, stepped down from his position as regent (*kanpaku*) and gave it to his son Fujiwara no Michitaka, who was referred to as middle regent (*naka no kanpaku*). Michitaka married his daughter Teishi to Emperor Ichijō (r. 986–1011) in 990, and she soon became a high consort (*nyōgo*) and then empress (*chūgū*). Sei Shōnagon became a lady-in-waiting to Teishi in 993, the year that Michitaka became prime minister (*daijō daijin*). In 994 Korechika, Michitaka's eldest son and the apparent heir to the regency, became palace minister (*naidaijin*). In 995 Michitaka died in an epidemic, and in the following year Korechika was exiled in a move engineered by Michitaka's younger brother and rival Michinaga, and Teishi was forced to leave the imperial palace. Sei Shōnagon continued to serve Teishi until Teishi's death in childbirth in 1000. In the

238. This remark by one of her attendants makes it clear that it is Kaneie in the carriage.

239. Her son, Michitsuna.

240. Presumably Kaneie has ordered that this special mark of respect be made to him.

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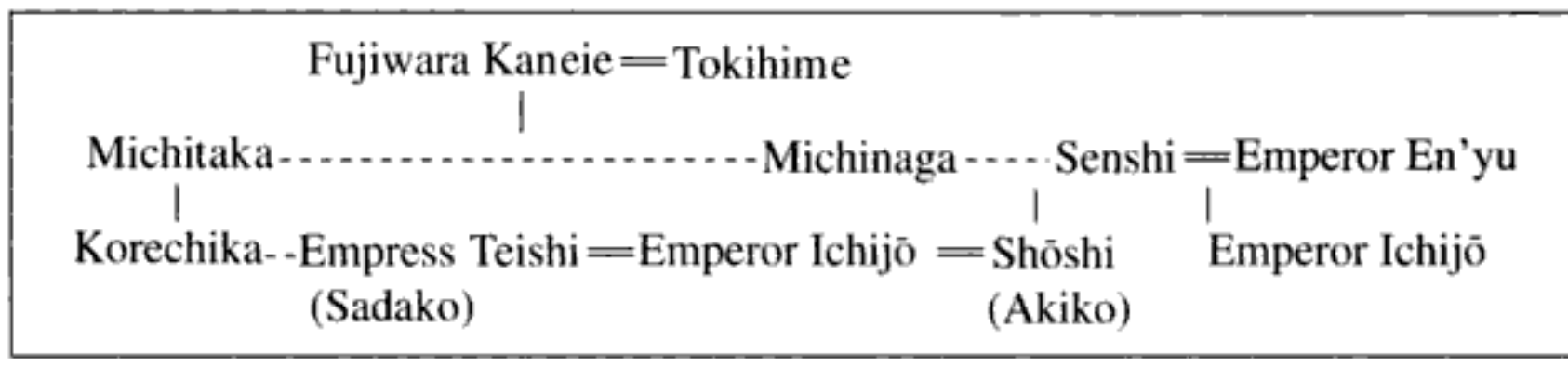

Political context for Sei Shōnagon

meantime, in 999, Shōshi, Michinaga's daughter and Murasaki Shikibu's mistress, became the chief consort to Emperor Ichijō, marking Michinaga's ascent to the pinnacle of power.

THE PILLOW BOOK (*MAKURA NO SŌSHI*, CA. 1005)

The Pillow Book, which was finished around 1005, after the demise of Teishi's salon, focuses on the years 993 and 994, when the Michitaka family and Teishi were at the height of their glory, leaving unmentioned the subsequent tragedy. Almost all the major works by women of this time were written by women in Empress Shōshi's salon: Murasaki Shikibu, Izumi Shikibu, and Akazome'emon. Only Sei Shōnagon's *Pillow Book* represents the rival salon of Empress Teishi. Like many other diaries by court women, *The Pillow Book* can be seen as a memorial to the author's patron, specifically, an homage to the Naka no Kanpaku family and a literary prayer to the spirit of the deceased empress Teishi. One of the few indirect references to the sad circumstances that befell Teishi's family is "The Cat Who Lived in the Palace," about the cruel punishment, sudden exile, and ignominious return of the dog Okinamaro, who, like Korechika, secretly returned to the capital and later was pardoned.

The three hundred discrete sections of *The Pillow Book* can be divided into three different types—lists, essay, and diary—that sometimes overlap. The list sections consist of noun sections (*mono wa*), which describe particular categories of things like "Flowering Trees," "Birds," and "Insects" and tend to focus on nature or poetic topics, and adjectival sections (*monozukushi*), which describe a particular state, such as "Depressing Things," and contain interesting lists and often are (particularly in the case of negative adjectives) humorous and witty. The diary sections, such as "The Sliding Screen in the Back of the Hall," describe specific events and figures in history, particularly those related to Empress Teishi and her immediate family.

The essay sections sometimes focus on a specific season or month, but unlike the diary sections, they bear no historical dates. The textual variants of *The Pillow Book* treat these three section types differently. The Maeda and Sakai variants separate them into three large groups. By contrast, the Nōin variant and the Sankan variant, which is translated here and has become the canonical version, mix the different types of sections. The end result is that *The Pillow Book* appears ahistorical; events are not presented in chronological order but instead move back and forth in time, with no

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particular development or climax, creating a sense of a world suspended in time, a mode perhaps suitable for a paean to Teishi's family.

Another category, which overlaps with the others and resembles anecdotal literature, is the "stories heard" (*kikigaki*)—that is, stories heard from one's master or mistress—which provided knowledge and models of cultivation. Indeed, much of *The Pillow Book* is about aristocratic women's education, especially the need for aesthetic awareness as well as erudition, allusiveness, and extreme refinement in communication. Sei Shōnagon shows a particular concern for delicacy and harmony, for the proper combination of object, sense, and circumstance, usually a fusion of human and natural worlds. Incongruity and disharmony, by contrast, become the butt of humor and of Sei Shōnagon's sharp wit. *The Pillow Book* is often read as a personal record of accomplishments, with a number of the sections about incidents that display the author's talent. Indeed, much of the interest of *The Pillow Book* has been in the strong character and personality of Sei Shōnagon.

The Pillow Book is noted for its distinctive prose style: its rhythmic, quick-moving, compressed, and varied sentences, often set up in alternating couplets. Although the typical Japanese sentence ends with the predicate, the phrases and sentences in *The Pillow Book* often end with nouns or eliminate the exclamatory and connective particles so characteristic of Heian women's literature. The compact, forceful, bright, witty style stands in contrast to the soft, meandering style found in *The Tale of Genji* and other works by Heian women. Indeed, the adjectival sections in particular have a *haikai*-esque (comic linked verse) quality, marked by witty, unexpected juxtaposition.

The Pillow Book is now considered one of the twin pillars of Heian vernacular court literature, but unlike the *Kokinshū*, *The Tales of Ise*, and *The Tale of Genji*, which had been canonized by the thirteen century, *The Pillow Book* was not a required text for waka poets (perhaps because it contained relatively little poetry) and was relatively neglected in the Heian and medieval periods. But *The Pillow Book* became popular with the new commoner audience in the Tokugawa (Edo) period and was widely read for its style, humor, and interesting lists. By the modern period, *The Pillow Book* was treated as an exemplar of the *zuihitsu* (meanderings of the brush) or miscellany genre, centered on personal observations and musings. Since then, it has been regarded in modern literary histories as the generic predecessor of *An Account of a Ten-Foot-Square Hut* (*Hōjōki*) and *Essays in Idleness* (*Tsurezuregusa*).

In Spring It Is the Dawn (1)

In spring it is the dawn that is most beautiful. As the light creeps over the hills, their outlines are dyed a faint red, and wisps of purplish cloud trail over them.

In summer the nights. Not only when the moon shines but on dark nights, too, as the fireflies flit to and fro, and even when it rains, how beautiful it is!

In autumn the evenings, when the glittering sun sinks close to the edge of the hills and the crows fly back to their nests in threes and fours and twos; more charming still is a file of wild geese, like specks in the distant sky. When the

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sun has set, one's heart is moved by the sound of the wind and the hum of the insects.

In winter the early mornings. It is beautiful indeed when snow has fallen during the night, but splendid too when the ground is white with frost; or even when there is no snow or frost, but it is simply very cold and the attendants hurry from room to room stirring up the fires and bringing charcoal, how well this fits the season's mood! But as noon approaches and the cold wears off, no one bothers to keep the braziers alight, and soon nothing remains but piles of white ashes.

To Make a Beloved Son a Priest (6)

That parents should bring up some beloved son of theirs to be a priest is really distressing. No doubt it is an auspicious[241] thing to do, but unfortunately most people are convinced that a priest is as unimportant as a piece of wood, and they treat him accordingly. A priest lives poorly on meager food and cannot even sleep without being criticized. While he is young, it is only natural that he should be curious about all sorts of things, and if there are women about, he will probably peep in their direction (though, to be sure, with a look of aversion on his face). What is wrong with that? Yet people immediately find fault with him for even so small a lapse.

The lot of an exorcist is still more painful. On his pilgrimages to Mitake, Kumano, and all the other sacred mountains, he often undergoes the greatest hardships. When people come to hear that his prayers are effective, they summon him here and there to perform services of exorcism: the more popular he becomes, the less peace he enjoys. Sometimes he will be called to see a patient who is seriously ill, and he has to exert all his powers to cast out the spirit that is causing the affliction. But if he dozes off, exhausted by his efforts, people say reproachfully, "Really, this priest does nothing but sleep." Such comments are most embarrassing for the exorcist, and I can imagine how he must feel.

That is how things used to be; nowadays priests have a somewhat easier life.

The Cat Who Lived in the Palace (8)

The cat who lived in the palace had been awarded the headdress of nobility[242] and was called Lady Myōbu. She was a very pretty cat, and His Majesty saw to it that she was treated with the greatest care.

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241. Popular Buddhist beliefs at the time included the notion that "if a man becomes a priest, his father and mother will be saved until the seventh generation."

242. Originally given by the emperor to nobility of the fifth rank and above. The cap was small, round, and black with a protuberance sticking up in the back and a wide, stiff ribbon hanging down the back.

Bahan dengan hak cipta

One day she wandered onto the veranda, and Lady Uma, the nurse in charge of her, called out, "Oh, you naughty thing! Please come inside at once." But the cat paid no attention and went on basking sleepily in the sun. Intending to give her a scare, the nurse called for the dog, Okinamaro.

"Okinamaro, where are you?" she cried. "Come here and bite Lady Myōbu!" The foolish Okinamaro, believing that the nurse was in earnest, rushed at the cat, who, startled and terrified, ran behind the blind in the imperial dining room, where the emperor happened to be sitting. Greatly surprised, His Majesty picked up the cat and held her in his arms. He summoned his gentlemen-in-waiting. When Tadataka, the chamberlain,[243] appeared, His Majesty ordered that Okinamaro be chastised and banished to Dog Island. All the attendants started to chase the dog amid great confusion. His Majesty also reproached Lady Uma. "We shall have to find a new nurse for our cat," he told her. "I no longer feel I can count on you to look after her." Lady Uma bowed; thereafter she no longer appeared in the emperor's presence.

The imperial guards quickly succeeded in catching Okinamaro and drove him out of the palace grounds. Poor dog! He used to swagger about so happily. Recently, on the third day of the Third Month,[244] when the controller first secretary paraded him through the palace grounds, Okinamaro was adorned with garlands of willow leaves, peach blossoms on his head, and cherry blossoms around his body. How could the dog have imagined that this would be his fate? We all felt sorry for him. "When Her Majesty was having her meals," recalled one of the ladies-in-waiting, "Okinamaro always used to be in attendance and sit across from us. How I miss him!"

It was about noon, a few days after Okinamaro's banishment, that we heard a dog howling fearfully. How could any dog possibly cry so long? All the other dogs rushed out in excitement to see what was happening. Meanwhile, a woman who served as a cleaner in the palace latrines ran up to us. "It's terrible," she said. "Two of the chamberlains are flogging a dog. They'll surely kill him. He's being punished for having come back after he was banished. It's Tadataka and Sanefusa who are beating him." Obviously the victim was Okinamaro. I was absolutely wretched and sent a servant to ask the men to stop, but just then the howling finally ceased. "He's dead," one of the servants informed me. "They've thrown his body outside the gate."

That evening, while we were sitting in the palace bemoaning Okinamaro's fate, a wretched-looking dog walked in; he was trembling all over, and his body was fearfully swollen.

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243. One of the officials in the emperor's private office, which was in charge of matters relating to the emperor and his palace.

244. A festival day marked by banquets held beside garden streams and by ritual purification. It was also known as the Peach Festival (Momo no sekku).

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"Oh dear," said one of the ladies-in-waiting. "Can this be Okinamaro? We haven't seen any other dog like him recently, have we?"

We called to him by name, but the dog did not respond. Some of us insisted that it was Okinamaro; others that it was not. "Please send for Lady Ukon," said the empress, hearing our discussion. "She will certainly be able to tell." We immediately went to Ukon's room and told her she was wanted on an urgent matter.

"Is this Okinamaro?" the empress asked her, pointing to the dog.

"Well," said Ukon, "it certainly looks like him, but I cannot believe that this loathsome creature is really our Okinamaro. When I called Okinamaro, he always used to come to me, wagging his tail. But this dog does not react at all. No, it cannot be the same one. And besides, wasn't Okinamaro beaten to death and his body thrown away? How could any dog be alive after being flogged by two strong men?" Hearing this, Her Majesty was very unhappy.

When it got dark, we gave the dog something to eat, but he refused it, and we finally decided that this could not be Okinamaro.

On the following morning I went to attend the empress while her hair was being dressed and she was performing her ablutions. I was holding up the mirror for her when the dog we had seen on the previous evening slunk into the room and crouched next to one of the pillars. "Poor Okinamaro!" I said. "He had such a dreadful beating yesterday. How sad to think he is dead! I wonder what body he has been born into this time. Oh, how he must have suffered!"

At that moment the dog lying by the pillar started to shake and tremble and shed a flood of tears. It was astounding. So this really was Okinamaro! On the previous night it was to avoid betraying himself that he had refused to answer to his name. We were immensely moved and pleased. "Well, well, Okinamaro!" I said, putting down the mirror. The dog stretched himself flat on the floor and yelped loudly, so that the empress beamed with delight. All the ladies gathered round, and Her Majesty summoned Lady Ukon. When the empress explained what had happened, everyone talked and laughed with great excitement.

The news reached His Majesty, and he too came to the empress's room. "It's amazing," he said with a smile. "To think that even a dog has such deep feelings!" When the emperor's ladies-in-waiting heard the story, they too came along in a great crowd. "Okinamaro!" we called, and this time the dog rose and limped about the room with his swollen face. "He must have a meal prepared for him," I said. "Yes," said the empress, laughing happily, "now that Okinamaro has finally told us who he is."

The chamberlain, Tadataka, was informed, and he hurried along from the Table Room.[245] "Is it really true?" he asked. "Please let me see for myself." I sent a maid to him with the following reply: "Alas, I am afraid that this is not

245. A room with a large table adjoining the imperial dining room.

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the same dog after all." "Well," answered Tadataka, "whatever you say, I shall sooner or later have occasion to see the animal. You won't be able to hide him from me indefinitely."

Before long, Okinamaro was granted an imperial pardon and returned to his former happy state. Yet even now, when I remember how he whimpered and trembled in response to our sympathy, it strikes me as a strange and moving scene; when people talk to me about it, I start crying myself.

The Sliding Screen in the Back of the Hall (11)

The sliding screen in the back of the hall in the northeast corner of Seiryō Palace is decorated with paintings of the stormy sea and of the terrifying creatures with long arms and long legs that live there.[246] When the doors of the empress's room were open, we could always see this screen. One day we were sitting in the room, laughing at the paintings and remarking how unpleasant they were. By the balustrade of the veranda stood a large celadon vase, full of magnificent cherry branches; some of them were as much as five feet long, and their blossoms overflowed to the very foot of the railing. Toward noon the major counselor, Fujiwara no Korechika,[247] arrived. He was dressed in a cherry-color court cloak, sufficiently worn to have lost its stiffness, a white underrobe, and loose trousers of dark purple; from beneath the cloak shone the pattern of another robe of dark red damask. Since His Majesty was present, Korechika knelt on the narrow wooden platform in front of the door and reported to him on official matters.

A group of ladies-in-waiting was seated behind the bamboo blinds. Their cherry-color Chinese jackets hung loosely over their shoulders with the collars pulled back; they wore robes of wisteria, golden yellow, and other colors, many of which showed beneath the blind covering the half shutter. Presently the noise of the attendants' feet told us that dinner was about to be served in the Daytime Chamber, and we heard cries of "Make way. Make way."

The bright, serene day delighted me. When the chamberlains had brought all the dishes into the chamber, they came to announce that dinner was ready, and His Majesty left by the middle door. After accompanying the emperor, Korechika returned to his previous place on the veranda beside the cherry blossoms. The empress pushed aside her curtain of state and came forward as far as the threshold. We were overwhelmed by the whole delightful scene. It was then that Korechika slowly intoned the words of the old poem,

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246. According to traditional Chinese beliefs, the northeast was the unlucky direction. The sliding screen "protected" this room from the northern veranda of the palace by scaring away any evil spirits that might be lurking in the vicinity.

247. Korechika, the elder brother of the empress, who was appointed to major counselor in 992.

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The days and the months flow by,
but Mount Mimoro lasts forever.[248]

Deeply impressed, I wished that all this might indeed continue for a thousand years.

As soon as the ladies serving in the Daytime Chamber had called for the gentlemen-in-waiting to remove the trays, His Majesty returned to the empress's room. Then he told me to rub some ink on the inkstone. Dazzled, I felt that I should never be able to take my eyes off his radiant countenance. Next he folded a piece of white paper. "I should like each of you," he said, "to copy down on this paper the first ancient poem that comes into your head."

"How am I going to manage this?" I asked Korechika, who was still out on the veranda.

"Write your poem quickly," he said, "and show it to His Majesty. We men must not interfere in this." Ordering an attendant to take the emperor's inkstone to each of the women in the room, he told us to make haste. "Write down any poem you happen to remember," he said. "The Naniwazu[249] or whatever else you can think of."

For some reason I was overcome with timidity; I blushed and had no idea what to do. Some of the other women managed to put down poems about the spring, the blossoms, and such suitable subjects; then they handed me the paper and said, "Now it's your turn." Picking up the brush, I wrote the poem that goes,

The years have passed
and age has come my way.
Yet I need only look at this fair flower
for all my cares to melt away.

I altered the third line, however, to read, "Yet I need only look upon my lord."[250]

When he had finished reading, the emperor said, "I asked you to write these poems because I wanted to find out how quick you really were.

"A few years ago," he continued, "Emperor En'yū ordered all his courtiers to write poems in a notebook. Some excused themselves on the grounds that their handwriting was poor; but the emperor insisted, saying that he did not

248. From the *Man'yōshū*.

249. A famous poem attributed to the Korean scholar Wani and later to Emperor Nintoku. Children in the Heian period were taught the poem for writing practice.

250. Fujiwara no Yoshifusa, *Kokinshū*, no. 52.

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care in the slightest about their handwriting or even whether their poems were suitable for the season. So they all had to swallow their embarrassment and produce something for the occasion. Among them was His Excellency, our present chancellor, who was then middle captain of the third rank. He wrote down the old poem,

> Like the sea that beats
> upon the shores of Izumo
> as the tide sweeps in,
> deeper it grows and deeper—
> the love I bear for you.

"But he changed the last line to read, 'The love I bear my lord!,' and the emperor was full of praise."

When I heard His Majesty tell this story, I was so overcome that I felt myself perspiring. It occurred to me that no younger woman would have been able to use my poem, and I felt very lucky. This sort of test can be a terrible ordeal: it often happens that people who usually write fluently are so overawed that they actually make mistakes in their characters.

Next the empress placed a notebook of *Kokinshū* poems in front of her and started reading out the first three lines of each one, asking us to supply the remainder. Among them were several famous poems that we had in our minds day and night; yet for some strange reason we were often unable to fill in the missing lines. Lady Saishō, for example, could manage only ten, which hardly qualified her as knowing her *Kokinshū*. Some of the other women, even less successful, could remember only about half a dozen poems. They would have done better to tell the empress quite simply that they had forgotten the lines; instead they came out with great lamentations like "Oh dear, how could we have done so badly in answering the questions that Your Majesty was pleased to put to us?"—all of which I found rather absurd.

When no one could complete a particular poem, the empress continued reading to the end. This produced further wails from the women: "Oh, we all knew that one! How could we be so stupid?"

"Those of you," said the empress, "who had taken the trouble to copy out the *Kokinshū* several times would have been able to complete every single poem I have read. In the reign of Emperor Murakami there was a woman at court known as the Imperial Lady of Sen'yō Palace. She was the daughter of the minister of the left who lived in the Smaller Palace of the First Ward, and of course you all have heard of her. When she was still a young girl, her father gave her this advice: 'First you must study penmanship. Next you must learn to play the seven-string zither better than anyone else. And also you must memorize all the poems in the twenty volumes of the *Kokinshū*.'

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"Emperor Murakami," continued Her Majesty, "had heard this story and remembered it years later when the girl had grown up and become an imperial consort. Once, on a day of abstinence,[251] he came into her room, hiding a notebook of *Kokinshū* poems in the folds of his robe. He surprised her by seating himself behind a curtain of state; then, opening the book, he asked, 'Tell me the verse written by such-and-such a poet, in such-and-such a year and on such-and-such an occasion.' The lady understood what was afoot and that it was all in fun, yet the possibility of making a mistake or forgetting one of the poems must have worried her greatly. Before beginning the test, the emperor had summoned a couple of ladies-in-waiting who were particularly adept in poetry and told them to mark each incorrect reply by a *go* stone. What a splendid scene it must have been! You know, I really envy anyone who attended that emperor even as a lady-in-waiting.

"Well," Her Majesty went on, "he then began questioning her. She answered without any hesitation, just giving a few words or phrases to show that she knew each poem. And never once did she make a mistake. After a time the emperor began to resent the lady's flawless memory and decided to stop as soon as he detected any error or vagueness in her replies. Yet, after he had gone through ten books of the *Kokinshū*, he had still not caught her out. At this stage he declared that it would be useless to continue. Marking where he had left off, he went to bed. What a triumph for the lady!

"He slept for some time. On waking, he decided that he must have a final verdict and that if he waited until the following day to examine her on the other ten volumes, she might use the time to refresh her memory. So he would have to settle the matter that very night. Ordering his attendants to bring up the bedroom lamp, he resumed his questions. By the time he had finished all twenty volumes, the night was well advanced; and still the lady had not made a mistake.

"During all this time His Excellency, the lady's father, was in a state of great agitation. As soon as he was informed that the emperor was testing his daughter, he sent his attendants to various temples to arrange for special recitations of the scriptures. Then he turned in the direction of the imperial palace and spent a long time in prayer. Such enthusiasm for poetry is really rather moving."

The emperor, who had been listening to the whole story, was much impressed. "How can he possibly have read so many poems?" he remarked when Her Majesty had finished. "I doubt whether I could get through three or four volumes. But of course things have changed. In the old days even people of humble station had a taste for the arts and were interested in elegant pastimes. Such a story would hardly be possible nowadays, would it?"

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251. One of the frequent inauspicious days determined by the masters of divination, when, according to current superstition, it was essential to stay indoors and, as much as possible, to abstain from all activities, including eating, sexual intercourse, and even such seemingly innocuous acts as reading a letter.

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The ladies in attendance on Her Majesty and the emperor's own ladies-in-waiting who had been admitted into Her Majesty's presence began chatting eagerly, and as I listened I felt that my cares had really "melted away."

Depressing Things (13)

A dog howling in the daytime. A wickerwork fishnet in spring.[252] A red plum-blossom dress[253] in the Third or Fourth Month. A lying-in room when the baby has died. A cold, empty brazier. An ox driver who hates his oxen. A scholar whose wife has one girl child after another.[254]

One has gone to a friend's house to avoid an unlucky direction,[255] but nothing is done to entertain one; if this should happen at the time of a seasonal change, it is still more depressing.

A letter arrives from the provinces, but no gift accompanies it. It would be bad enough if such a letter reached one in the provinces from someone in the capital; but then at least it would have interesting news about goings-on in society, and that would be a consolation.

One has written a letter, taking pains to make it as attractive as possible, and now one impatiently awaits the reply. "Surely the messenger should be back by now," one thinks. Just then he returns; but in his hand he carries not a reply but one's own letter, still twisted or knotted[256] as it was sent, but now so dirty and crumpled that even the ink mark on the outside has disappeared. "Not at home," announces the messenger, or else, "They said they were observing a day of abstinence and would not accept it." Oh, how depressing!

Again, one has sent one's carriage to fetch someone who had said he would definitely pay one a visit on that day. Finally it returns with a great clatter, and the servants hurry out with cries of "Here they come!" But next one hears the carriage being pulled into the coach house, and the unfastened shafts clatter to the ground. "What does this mean?" one asks. "The person was not at home,"

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252. These nets were designed for catching whitebait during the winter; in springtime they were useless.

253. Dresses of this color could be worn only during the Eleventh and Twelfth Months.

254. Scholarly activities, like most other specialized occupations, tended to run in families, and they were not considered suitable for girls.

255. When a master of divination informed someone that a certain direction was "blocked" by one of the invisible, moving deities central to Heian superstition, he or she might circumvent the danger by first proceeding in a different direction. Then after stopping on the way at an intermediate place and staying there at least until midnight, that person would continue to the intended destination.

256. The two main types of formal letters were "knotted" and "twisted." Both were folded lengthwise into a narrow strip; but whereas the knotted kind was knotted in the middle or at one end, the twisted kind was twisted at both ends and tended to be narrower.

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replies the driver, "and will not be coming." So saying, he leads the ox back to its stall, leaving the carriage in the coach house.

With much bustle and excitement a young man has moved into the house of a certain family as the daughter's husband. One day he fails to come home, and it turns out that some high-ranking court lady has taken him as her lover. How depressing! "Will he eventually tire of the woman and come back to us?" his wife's family wonder ruefully.

The nurse who is looking after a baby leaves the house, saying that she will be back soon. Soon the child starts crying for her. One tries to comfort it with games and other diversions and even sends a message to the nurse telling her to return immediately. Then comes her reply: "I am afraid that I cannot be back this evening." This is not only depressing; it is no less than hateful. Yet how much more distressed must be the young man who has sent a messenger to fetch a lady friend and who awaits her arrival in vain!

It is quite late at night and a woman has been expecting a visitor. Hearing finally a stealthy tapping, she sends her maid to open the gate and lies waiting excitedly. But the name announced by the maid is that of someone with whom she has absolutely no connection. Of all the depressing things, this is by far the worst.

With a look of complete self-confidence on his face an exorcist prepares to expel an evil spirit from his patient. Handing his mace, rosary, and other paraphernalia to the medium who is assisting him, he begins to recite his spells in the special shrill tone that he forces from his throat on such occasions. For all the exorcist's efforts, the spirit gives no sign of leaving, and the Guardian Demon fails to take possession of the medium.[257] The relations and friends of the patient, who are gathered in the room praying, find this rather unfortunate. After he has recited his incantations for the length of an entire watch,[258] the exorcist is worn out. "The Guardian Demon is completely inactive," he tells his medium. "You may leave." Then, as he takes back his rosary, he adds, "Well, well, it hasn't worked!" He passes his hand over his forehead, then yawns deeply (he of all people!), and leans back against a pillar for a nap.

Most depressing is the household of some hopeful candidate who fails to receive a post during the period of official appointments. Hearing that the gentleman was bound to be successful, several people have gathered in his house for the occasion; among them are a number of retainers who served him

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257. The aim of the exorcist was to transfer the evil spirit from the afflicted person to the medium, usually a young girl or a woman, and to force it to declare itself. The exorcist used various spells and incantations to make the Guardian Demon of Buddhism take possession of the medium. When he was successful, the medium would tremble, scream, have convulsions, faint, or behave as if in a hypnotic trance. The spirit would then declare itself through her mouth. The final step was to drive the spirit out of the medium.

258. One watch was the equivalent of two hours.

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in the past but who since then have either been engaged elsewhere or moved to some remote province. Now they all are eager to accompany their former master on his visit to the shrines and temples, and their carriages pass to and fro in the courtyard. Indoors there is a great commotion as the hangers-on help themselves to food and drink. Yet the dawn of the last day of the appointments arrives, and still no one has knocked at the gate. The people in the house are nervous and prick up their ears.

Presently they hear the shouts of forerunners and realize that the high dignitaries are leaving the palace. Some of the servants were sent to the palace on the previous evening to hear the news and have been waiting all night, trembling with cold; now they come trudging back listlessly. The attendants who have remained faithfully in the gentleman's service year after year cannot bring themselves to ask what has happened. His former retainers, however, are not so diffident. "Tell us," they say, "what appointment did His Excellency receive?" "Indeed," murmur the servants, "His Excellency was governor of such-and-such a province." Everyone was counting on his receiving a new appointment and is desolated by this failure. On the following day the people who had crowded into the house begin to slink away in twos and threes. The old attendants, however, cannot leave so easily. They walk restlessly about the house, counting on their fingers the provincial appointments that will become available in the following year. Pathetic and depressing in the extreme!

One has sent a friend a verse that turned out fairly well. How depressing when there is no reply poem! Even in the case of love poems, people should at least answer that they were moved at receiving the message or something of the sort; otherwise they will cause the keenest disappointment.

Someone who lives in a bustling, fashionable household receives a message from an elderly person who is behind the times and has very little to do; the poem, of course, is old-fashioned and dull. How depressing!

One needs a particularly beautiful fan for some special occasion and instructs an artist, in whose talents one has full confidence, to decorate one with an appropriate painting. When the day comes and the fan is delivered, one is shocked to see how badly it has been painted. Oh, the dreariness of it!

A messenger arrives with a present at a house where a child has been born or where someone is about to leave on a journey. How depressing for him if he gets no reward! People should always reward a messenger, though he may bring only herbal balls or hare sticks.[259] If he expects nothing, he will be

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259. Herbal balls: during the Iris Festival (Tango no sekku) on the fifth day of the Fifth Month, various kinds of herbs were bound into balls and put into round cotton or silk bags, which were decorated with irises and other plants, as well as with long, five-color cords. They were then hung on pillars, curtains, and the like to protect the inhabitants of the house from illness and other misfortunes. Hare-sticks, three-inch sticks with long, colored tassels, were hung on pillars in the palace and in the houses of the nobility to keep away evil spirits.

Bahan dengan hak cipta

particularly pleased to be rewarded. On the other hand, what a terrible letdown if he arrives with a self-important look on his face, his heart pounding in anticipation of a generous reward, only to have his hopes dashed!

A man has moved in as a son-in-law; yet even now, after some five years of marriage, the lying-in room has remained as quiet as on the day of his arrival.

An elderly couple who have several grown-up children, and who may even have some grandchildren crawling about the house, are taking a nap in the daytime. The children who see them in this state are overcome by a forlorn feeling, and for other people it is all very depressing.

To take a hot bath when one has just woken is not only depressing; it actually puts one in a bad humor.

Persistent rain on the last day of the year.

One has been observing a period of fast but neglects it for just one day—most depressing.

A white underrobe in the Eighth Month.[260]

A wet nurse who has run out of milk.

Hateful Things (14)

One is in a hurry to leave, but one's visitor keeps chattering away. If it is someone of no importance, one can get rid of him by saying, "You must tell me all about it next time"; but should it be the sort of visitor whose presence commands one's best behavior, the situation is hateful indeed.

One finds that a hair has got caught in the stone on which one is rubbing one's inkstick, or again that gravel is lodged in the inkstick, making a nasty, grating sound.

Someone has suddenly fallen ill, and one summons the exorcist. Since he is not at home, one has to send messengers to look for him. After one has had a long fretful wait, the exorcist finally arrives, and with a sigh of relief one asks him to start his incantations. But perhaps he has been exorcising too many evil spirits recently; for hardly has he installed himself and begun praying when his voice becomes drowsy. Oh, how hateful!

A man who has nothing in particular to recommend him discusses all sorts of subjects at random as though he knows everything.

An elderly person warms the palms of his hands over a brazier and stretches out the wrinkles. No young man would dream of behaving in such a fashion; old people can really be quite shameless. I have seen some dreary old creatures actually resting their feet on the brazier and rubbing them against the edge while they speak. These are the kinds of people who, when visiting someone's

260. A white underrobe was normally worn only in the summer months; the Eighth Month was the second month of autumn.

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house, first use their fans to wipe away the dust from the mat and, when they finally sit on it, cannot stay still but are forever spreading out the front of their hunting costume[261] or even tucking it up under their knees. One might suppose that such behavior was restricted to people of humble station, but I have observed it in quite well-bred people, including a senior secretary of the fifth rank in the Ministry of Ceremonial and a former governor of Suruga.

I hate the sight of men in their cups who shout, poke their fingers in their mouths, stroke their beards, and pass on the wine to their neighbors with great cries of "Have some more! Drink up!" They tremble, shake their heads, twist their faces, and gesticulate like children who are singing, "We're off to see the governor." I have seen really well-bred people behave like this and I find it most distasteful.

To envy others and to complain about one's own lot; to speak badly about people; to be inquisitive about the most trivial matters and to resent and abuse people for not telling one, or, if one does manage to worm out some facts, to inform everyone in the most detailed fashion as if one had known all from the beginning—oh, how hateful!

One is just about to be told some interesting piece of news when a baby starts crying.

A flight of crows circle about with loud caws.

An admirer has come on a clandestine visit, but a dog catches sight of him and starts barking. One feels like killing the beast.

One has been foolish enough to invite a man to spend the night in an unsuitable place—and then he starts snoring.

A gentleman has visited one secretly. Although he is wearing a tall, lacquered hat,[262] he nevertheless wants no one to see him. He is so flurried, in fact, that upon leaving he bangs into something with his hat. Most hateful! It is annoying too when he lifts up the Iyo blind[263] that hangs at the entrance of the room, then lets it fall with a great rattle. If it is a head blind, things are still worse, for, being more solid, it makes a terrible noise when it is dropped. There is no excuse for such carelessness. Even a head blind does not make any noise if one lifts it up gently on entering and leaving the room; the same applies to sliding doors. If one's movements are rough, even a paper door will bend and resonate when opened; but if one lifts the door a little while pushing it, there need be no sound.

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261. Men's informal outdoor costume, originally worn for hunting.

262. A black, lacquered headdress worn by men on the top of the head and secured by a mauve silk cord that was fastened under the chin.

263. An Iyo blind is a rough type of reed blind manufactured in the province of Iyo on the Inland Sea. A head blind is a more elegant type of blind whose top and edges were decorated with strips of silk. It also had thin strips of bamboo along the edges and was therefore heavier than ordinary blinds.

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One has gone to bed and is about to doze off when a mosquito appears, announcing himself in a reedy voice. One can actually feel the wind made by his wings, and slight though it is, one finds it hateful in the extreme.

A carriage passes with a nasty, creaking noise. Annoying to think that the passengers may not even be aware of this! If I am traveling in someone's carriage and I hear it creaking, I dislike not only the noise but also the owner of the carriage.

One is in the middle of a story when someone butts in and tries to show that he is the only clever person in the room. Such a person is hateful, and so, indeed, is anyone, child or adult, who tries to push himself forward.

One is telling a story about old times when someone breaks in with a little detail that he happens to know, implying that one's own version is inaccurate—disgusting behavior!

Very hateful is a mouse that scurries all over the place.

Some children have called at one's house. One makes a great fuss of them and gives them toys to play with. The children become accustomed to this treatment and start to come regularly, forcing their way into one's inner rooms and scattering one's furnishings and possessions. Hateful!

A certain gentleman whom one does not want to see visits one at home or in the palace, and one pretends to be asleep. But a maid comes to tell one and shakes one awake, with a look on her face that says, "What a sleepyhead!" Very hateful.

A newcomer pushes ahead of the other members in a group; with a knowing look, this person starts laying down the law and forcing advice on everyone—most hateful.

A man with whom one is having an affair keeps singing the praises of some woman he used to know. Even if it is a thing of the past, this can be very annoying. How much more so if he is still seeing the woman! (Yet sometimes I find that it is not as unpleasant as all that.)

A person who recites a spell himself after sneezing.[264] In fact I detest anyone who sneezes, except the master of the house.

Fleas, too, are very hateful. When they dance about under someone's clothes, they really seem to be lifting them up.

The sound of dogs when they bark for a long time in chorus is ominous and hateful.

I cannot stand people who leave without closing the panel behind them.

How I detest the husbands of nursemaids! It is not so bad if the child in the maid's charge is a girl, because then the man will keep his distance. But, if it is a boy, he will behave as though he were the father. Never letting the boy out

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264. Sneezing was a bad omen, and it was normal to counteract its effects by reciting some auspicious formula, such as wishing long life to the person who had sneezed.

Sách có bản quyền

of his sight, he insists on managing everything. He regards the other attendants in the house as less than human, and if anyone tries to scold the child, he slanders him to the master. Despite this disgraceful behavior, no one dare accuse the husband; so he strides about the house with a proud, self-important look, giving all the orders.

I hate people whose letters show that they lack respect for worldly civilities, whether by discourtesy in the phrasing or extreme politeness to someone who does not deserve it. This sort of thing is, of course, most odious if the letter is for oneself, but it is bad enough even if it is addressed to someone else.

As a matter of fact, most people are too casual, not only in their letters, but in their direct conversation. Sometimes I am quite disgusted at noting how little decorum people observe when talking to each other. It is particularly unpleasant to hear some foolish man or woman omit the proper marks of respect when addressing a person of quality; and when servants fail to use honorific forms of speech in referring to their masters, it is very bad indeed. No less odious, however, are those masters who, in addressing their servants, use such phrases as "When you were good enough to do such-and-such" or "As you so kindly remarked." No doubt there are some masters who, in describing their own actions to a servant, say, "I presumed to do so-and-so"!

Sometimes a person who is utterly devoid of charm will try to create a good impression by using very elegant language, yet he succeeds only in being ridiculous. No doubt he believes this refined language to be just what the occasion demands, but when it goes so far that everyone bursts out laughing, surely something must be wrong.

It is most improper to address high-ranking courtiers, imperial advisers, and the like simply by using their names without any titles or marks of respect; but such mistakes are fortunately rare.

If one refers to the maid who is in attendance on some lady-in-waiting as "Madam" or "that lady," she will be surprised, delighted, and lavish in her praise.

When speaking to young noblemen and courtiers of high rank, one should always (unless their majesties are present) refer to them by their official posts. Incidentally, I have been very shocked to hear important people use the word "I" while conversing in their majesties' presence.[265] Such a breach of etiquette is really distressing, and I fail to see why people cannot avoid it.

A man who has nothing in particular to recommend him but who speaks in an affected tone and poses as being elegant.

An inkstone with such a hard, smooth surface that the stick glides over it without leaving any deposit of ink.

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265. Etiquette demanded that in the presence of the emperor or empress, one referred to oneself by one's name rather than by the first person singular.

Sách có bản quyền

Ladies-in-waiting who want to know everything that is going on.

Sometimes one greatly dislikes a person for no particular reason—and then that person goes and does something hateful.

A gentleman who travels alone in his carriage to see a procession or some other spectacle. What sort of a man is he? Even though he may not be a person of the greatest quality, surely he should have taken along a few of the many young men who are anxious to see the sights. But no, there he sits by himself (one can see his silhouette through the blinds), with a proud look on his face, keeping all his impressions to himself.

A lover who is leaving at dawn announces that he has to find his fan and his paper.[266] "I know I put them somewhere last night," he says. Since it is pitch dark, he gropes about the room, bumping into the furniture and muttering, "Strange! Where on earth can they be?" Finally he discovers the objects. He thrusts the paper into the breast of his robe with a great rustling sound; then he snaps open his fan and busily fans away with it. Only now is he ready to take his leave. What charmless behavior! "Hateful" is an understatement.

Equally disagreeable is the man who, when leaving in the middle of the night, takes care to fasten the cord of his headdress. This is quite unnecessary; he could perfectly well put it gently on his head without tying the cord. And why must he spend time adjusting his cloak or hunting costume? Does he really think someone may see him at this time of night and criticize him for not being impeccably dressed?

A good lover will behave as elegantly at dawn as at any other time. He drags himself out of bed with a look of dismay on his face. The lady urges him on: "Come, my friend, it's getting light. You don't want anyone to find you here." He gives a deep sigh, as if to say that the night has not been nearly long enough and that it is agony to leave. Once up, he does not instantly pull on his trousers. Instead he comes close to the lady and whispers whatever was left unsaid during the night. Even when he is dressed, he still lingers, vaguely pretending to be fastening his sash.

Presently he raises the lattice, and the two lovers stand together by the side door while he tells her how he dreads the coming day, which will keep them apart; then he slips away. The lady watches him go, and this moment of parting will remain among her most charming memories.

Indeed, one's attachment to a man depends largely on the elegance of his leave-taking. When he jumps out of bed, scurries about the room, tightly fastens his trouser sash, rolls up the sleeves of his court cloak, overrobe, or hunting costume, stuffs his belongings into the breast of his robe, and then briskly secures the outer sash—one really begins to hate him.

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266. Elegant colored paper that gentlemen carried in the folds of their clothes.

Sách có bản quyền

Things That Arouse a Fond Memory of the Past (17)

Dried hollyhock.[267] The objects used during the Display of Dolls. To find a piece of deep violet[268] or grape-color material that has been pressed between the pages of a notebook.

It is a rainy day and one is feeling bored. To pass the time, one starts looking through some old papers. And then one comes across the letters of a man one used to love.

Last year's paper fan. A night with a clear moon.[269]

A Preacher Ought to Be Good-Looking (21)

A preacher ought to be good-looking. For if we are properly to understand his worthy sentiments, we must keep our eyes on him while he speaks; should we look away, we may forget to listen. Accordingly, an ugly preacher may well be the source of sin. . . .

But I really must stop writing this kind of thing. If I were still young enough, I might risk the consequence of putting down such impieties, but at my present stage of life I should be less flippant.

Some people, on hearing that a priest is particularly venerable and pious, rush off to the temple where he is preaching, determined to arrive before anyone else. They, too, are liable to bring a load of sin on themselves and would do better to stay away.

In earlier times men who had retired from the post of chamberlain did not ride at the head of imperial processions; in fact, during the year of their retirement they hardly ever appeared outside their houses and did not dream of showing themselves in the precincts of the palace. Things seem to have changed. Nowadays they are known as "fifth-rank chamberlains" and given all sorts of official jobs.

Even so, time often hangs heavily on their hands, especially when they recall their busy days in active service. Although these fifth-rank chamberlains keep the fact to themselves, they know they have a good deal of leisure. Men like this frequently repair to temples and listen to the popular priests, such visits eventually becoming a habit. One will find them there even on hot summer days, decked out in bright linen robes, with loose trousers of light violet or bluish gray spread about them. Sometimes they will have taboo tags[270] attached

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267. During the Kamo Festival, also known as the Hollyhock (Aoi) Festival, hollyhock was attached to the pillars, blinds, and so on and left there until it withered and fell off.

268. Another reminder of the Kamo Festival.

269. In Japan, as in China, the moon traditionally evokes memories of the past.

270. A sign made of willow wood and hung outside one's house on days of abstinence to warn possible visitors. If one had to go out on one of these days, one would wear such a tag on one's headdress (men) or sleeve (women).

Sách có bản quyền

to their black lacquered headdresses. Far from preferring to stay at home on such inauspicious days, they apparently believe that no harm can come to anyone bent on so worthy an errand. They arrive hastily, converse with the priest, look inside the carriages that are being lined up outside the temple, and take an interest in everything.

Now a couple of gentlemen who have not met for some time run into each other in the temple and are greatly surprised. They sit down together and chat away, nodding their heads, exchanging funny stories, and opening their fans wide to hold before their faces so as to laugh more freely. Toying with their elegantly decorated rosaries, they glance about, criticizing some defect they have noticed in one of the carriages or praising the elegance of another. They discuss various services that they have recently attended and compare the skill of different priests in performing the Eight Lessons or the Dedication of Sutras.[271] Meanwhile, of course, they pay not the slightest attention to the service actually in progress. To be sure, it would not interest them very much; for they have heard it all so often that the priest's words could no longer make any impression.

After the priest has been on his dais for some time, a carriage stops outside the temple. The outriders clear the way in a somewhat perfunctory fashion, and the passengers get out. They are slender young gentlemen, clad either in hunting costumes or in court cloaks that look lighter than a cicada's wings, loose trousers, and unlined robes of raw silk. As they enter the temple, accompanied by an equal number of attendants, the worshipers, including those who have been there since the beginning of the service, move back to make room for them; the young men install themselves at the foot of a pillar near the dais. As one would expect from such people, they now make a great show of fingering their rosaries and prostrating themselves in prayer. The priest, convinced by the sight of the newcomers that this is a grand occasion, launches into an impressive sermon that he presumes will make his name in society. But no sooner have the young men settled down and finished touching their heads on the floor than they begin to think about leaving at the first opportunity. Two of them steal glances at the women's carriages outside, and it is easy to imagine what they are saying to each other. They recognize one of the women and admire her elegance; then, catching sight of a stranger, they discuss who she can be. I find it fascinating to see such goings-on in a temple.

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271. The Eight Lessons are a series of eight services in which the eight volumes of the Lotus Sutra were expounded. The dedication of sutras refers to the practice of ordering copies of the sutra to be made and dedicated to some person or institution. After the copy was completed, the sutra would be recited in a special service of dedication.

Sách có bản quyền

Often one hears exchanges like this: "There was a service at such-and-such a temple where they did the Eight Lessons." "Was Lady So-and-So present?" "Of course. How could she possibly have missed it?" It is really too bad that they should always answer like this.

One would imagine that it would be all right for ladies of quality to visit temples and take a discreet look at the preacher's dais. After all, even women of humble station may listen devoutly to religious sermons. Yet in the old days ladies almost never walked to temples to attend sermons; on the rare visits that they did undertake they had to wear elegant traveling costumes, as when making proper pilgrimages to shrines and temples. If people of those times had lived long enough to see the recent conduct in the temples, how they would have criticized the women of our day!

Elegant Things (29)

A white coat worn over a violet waistcoat.

Duck eggs.

Shaved ice mixed with liana syrup and put in a new silver bowl.

A rosary of rock crystal.

Wisteria blossoms. Plum blossoms covered with snow.

A pretty child eating strawberries.

Rare Things (47)

A son-in-law who is praised by his father-in-law; a young bride who is loved by her mother-in-law.

A silver tweezer that is good at plucking out the hair.

A servant who does not speak badly about his master.

A person who is in no way eccentric or imperfect, who is superior in both mind and body, and who remains flawless all his life.

People who live together and still manage to behave with reserve toward each other. However much these people may try to hide their weaknesses, they usually fail.

To avoid getting ink stains on the notebook into which one is copying stories, poems, or the like. If it is a very fine notebook, one takes the greatest care not to make a blot; yet somehow one never seems to succeed.

When people, whether they be men or women or priests, have promised each other eternal friendship, it is rare for them to stay on good terms until the end.

A servant who is pleasant to his master.

One has given some silk to the fuller, and when he sends it back, it is so beautiful that one cries out in admiration.

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Once When Her Majesty Was Residing (56)

Once when Her Majesty was residing in the Empress's Office, Perpetual Readings[272] were held in the western part of the main hall. The usual paintings of the Buddha had been hung for the occasion, and several priests were in attendance. On the second day of the readings the voice of a common-sounding woman reached us from the veranda. "I expect there'll be some scraps from the altar offerings," she said. "How could there be any leftovers this early in the service?" replied one of the priests. I wondered who the woman might be and went on to the veranda to have a look. It turned out to be an old nun dressed in a filthy cotton trouser skirt that was so short and narrow that it seemed more like a sort of tube than an article of clothing. Over this she wore something equally dirty which was presumably meant to be a robe but which came only about five inches below her sash. She really looked like a monkey.

"What do you want, woman?" I asked.

"Madam," she replied in an affected tone, "I am a disciple of the Buddha and I was hoping to receive the leftovers from his altar. But these priests are so stingy that they begrudge the smallest gift." She now spoke in a bright, elegant fashion, and I was rather touched to see her so crushed by misfortune. Yet there was a gaudiness about her manner that annoyed me, and I said, "So you eat nothing but the Buddha's holy leftovers! How worthy of you!" Seeing my expression she said, "Why do you suppose that's all I eat? It's only when I can't get anything else that I take leftovers."

I put some fruit, flat rice cakes, and other things in a basket and gave it to her. She then became extremely familiar and began chatting away. Some of the younger ladies-in-waiting joined us on the veranda and plied her with all sorts of questions, such as "Do you have a lover?" and "Where do you live?" to which she replied with jokes and suggestive quips. When one of them asked her whether she could sing and dance, she burst out with

> Who shall share my bed tonight?
> Hitachi no Suke[273]—he's my man!
> His skin is soft to touch.

This was followed by several other songs in a similar vein. Then she started rolling her head round and round and sang,

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272. Perpetual sacred readings were held at irregular intervals in the palace. Readings of the Sutra of Great Wisdom, the Lotus Sutra, and other scriptures would continue day and night.

273. Assistant governor of Hitachi Province.

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The maple leaves of scarlet
that tint Otoko's manly peak
proclaim that mountain far and wide.[274]

Her behavior was most unbecoming. The ladies-in-waiting laughed with disgust and said, "Be off with you!" which I found very amusing. "Let's give the woman something before we send her packing," said one of them.

The empress had heard all this and reprimanded us. "Why have you made her behave in such an embarrassing way?" she asked. "I couldn't bear to hear it and I had to stop up my ears. Here, give her this robe and send her away at once!"

The ladies took the robe and threw it at the woman, saying, "Her Majesty has generously given you this present. Take off your filthy robe and put on this nice clean one." The nun received it with a deep bow; then, draping it over her shoulders, she began to perform a dance of thanks. She was really too repulsive, and we all went indoors.

Evidently this gift made her feel that she was now fully accepted in Her Majesty's household; thereafter she was always coming and going, and soon she had acquired the nickname of Hitachi no Suke. She still wore her same dirty robe. We wondered what she had done with the one the empress gave her, and we felt quite disgusted with the creature.

One day when Lady Ukon paid a call, Her Majesty told her about the nun. "My ladies have taken it into their heads to befriend her," she said. "She's always coming to see us these days." Then she asked Lady Kohyōe to give an imitation of the nun. Lady Ukon burst out laughing. "How can I arrange to see her for myself?" she asked. "You really must show her to me. Don't think I'll try to take her away. I realize she is Your Majesty's favorite."

Later there came another nun—a cripple this time, but with a naturally elegant manner. She called to us from the veranda; when we went out, she begged for alms, in such an embarrassed way that we were truly sorry for her. Her Majesty ordered that she be given a robe and the nun prostrated herself on the ground. Her movements were much the same as the other nun's, but there was nothing unpleasant about her. Just as she was leaving the veranda, weeping for joy, Hitachi no Suke happened to arrive and caught a glimpse of her. Thereafter Hitachi did not visit us again for a long time, and we soon forgot about her.

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274. Mount Otoko, south of the capital, was noted for its red autumn foliage.

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From the tenth day of the Twelfth Month it snowed very heavily. I and the other ladies-in-waiting gathered large quantities of snow and heaped it on trays; then we decided to build a real snow mountain in the garden. Having summoned the servants, we told them it was on Her Majesty's orders, and so they all got to work. Men from the Office of Grounds, who had come to do some sweeping, also joined in, and soon the mountain was rising high above the ground. Next came some officials from the Office of the Empress's Household, who made suggestions and helped build an especially beautiful mountain. There were also a few assistant officials from the Emperor's Private Office and some more men from the Office of Grounds, so that soon we had about twenty people working away. In addition messages were sent to the servants off duty, saying that a special stipend would be given to anyone who helped on that day but that those who did not appear for work could expect nothing. This brought the men rushing out, except for those who lived far away and could not be informed.

When the mountain was finished, officials from the Office of the Empress's Household were summoned and given rolls of silk tied up in sets of two. They threw the rolls onto the veranda, and each of the workmen came and took a set. Having bowed low, they thrust the silk into their robes before withdrawing. Some of the court gentlemen changed from their formal overrobes into hunting costume and remained in attendance at the Empress's Office.

"Well," said Her Majesty, "how long is that mountain likely to last?"

Everyone guessed that it would be ten days or a little more.

"And what do you think?" the empress asked me.

"It will last until the fifteenth of the First Month," I declared.

Even Her Majesty found this hard to believe, and the other women insisted that it would melt before the end of the year. I realized I had chosen too distant a date; the mountain would last until the first of the year at the outside, which was the latest day I should have given. Yet there was no taking back what I had said: although I knew the mountain was unlikely to survive till the fifteenth, I stuck to my original prediction.

Toward the twentieth it began raining. There was no sign that the snow was about to melt, but the mountain did shrink a little. "Oh, Goddess of Mercy of Shirayama,"[275] I prayed frenziedly, "do not let our mountain melt away!"

On the day we built the mountain Tadataka, the secretary in the Ministry of Ceremonial, arrived with a message from the emperor. We gave him a cushion and joined him for a talk. "Today they're making snow mountains everywhere," he told us. "The emperor has ordered his men to build one in the garden in front of his palace, and they're also building them in the Eastern

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275. Shirayama (White Mountain), situated in the northern province of Kaga, was dedicated to the worship of the eleven-faced Kannon.

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Palace and in the Koki and Kyōgoku Palaces." Hearing this, I wrote a poem and asked the woman standing beside me to recite it:

> That mountain in our garden,
> which we had thought so rare!
> Everywhere its snowy likeness . . .
> and we can boast of nothing new.

Tadataka was impressed. "I would not want to spoil the brilliant effect of your poem by making a poor reply," he said, bowing repeatedly. "The next time I find myself outside the blinds of some fashionable court lady I shall repeat your lines." And with that he took his leave.

I had heard that Tadataka was very fond of poetry, and his behavior surprised me. When I told the empress about it, she said, "He obviously preferred not to reply at all unless he could produce something really good."

Toward the end of the year the snow mountain seemed to have become smaller, yet it was still very high. About noon one day, when I and some of the other women were sitting out on the veranda, Hitachi no Suke arrived. "Why haven't we seen you for such a long time?" we asked her. "Oh, nothing special," she said. "It's just that something rather sad happened to me." "And what may that be?" we asked. "Well," she replied, "I couldn't help feeling that

> Lucky indeed is she,
> that nunnish diver of the briny depths,
> who is so laden down with gifts
> that she can scarcely drag herself ashore."

She drawled out her poem, and we all laughed contemptuously. Since no one was paying much attention, she made her way to the snow mountain and walked around it before leaving. Later we sent Lady Ukon a message about the visit, and she replied, "Why didn't you bring her here? It was really too bad to abandon her like that and make her go all the way to that great mountain of yours by herself." This caused us to burst into laughter again.

New Year came without affecting the snow mountain in any way.

On the first day of the year it again started snowing heavily. I was happily thinking how the snow would gather on the mountain when Her Majesty said, "This has come at the wrong time. Leave what was there before and brush away the new snow."

Very early on the following morning, as I was going from the palace to my room, I saw a man who looked like a head retainer. He was on his way to the Empress's Office and was shivering with cold. On the sleeve of his nightwatch costume, which was as green as a citron leaf, I noticed a piece of paper, also green, attached to a pine twig.

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"Who sent this?" I asked him.

"The high priestess of Kamo,"[276] he replied.

Realizing at once that this must be something pleasant, I carried the letter to the empress's room. Her Majesty was still in bed, and I did my best to open her lattice door myself, using for this purpose a *go* board on which I stood as I tried to push up the heavy grating. The lattice was very heavy, but finally one side opened with a creaking sound that wakened the empress. "Why are you doing that?" she asked. "I have a letter from the high priestess," I replied, "which I had to deliver to Your Majesty as quickly as possible." "Well," she said, getting up, "it certainly is early for a letter."

Looking inside, she discovered a pair of hare sticks, each about five inches long. They had been placed end to end so that they looked like a single hare wand; some paper had been wrapped round the head of the sticks, which were prettily decorated with sprigs of wild orange, club moss, and mountain sedge. But there seemed to be no written message. "Can this really be all?" said the empress. Searching more carefully, however, we found the following verse written on a bit of paper wrapped around the end of the stick:

> I thought I heard the woodman's ax
> echoing through the hills.
> But, oh, it was a gladder sound—
> the cutting of the festive wands.[277]

As I watched the empress writing her reply to this letter (which turned out to be the beginning of a regular correspondence between her and the high priestess), I was full of admiration. Determined to make her letter as elegant as the one she had received, Her Majesty took the utmost pains to correct the wording until she considered it just right. The messenger was rewarded with an unlined costume of white material and another of dark red that looked like plum blossom. I enjoyed watching the man set off in the falling snow with the clothes over his shoulder. Unfortunately I never found out what Her Majesty had replied.

Meanwhile our snow mountain, dirty and unattractive though it had become, showed no sign of melting; and one would really have thought that it belonged to the northern land of Koshi. I prayed that somehow it would survive until the fifteenth. I was convinced that I would win, but some people insisted that it would not outlast the seventh. We all had decided to wait and see what happened when suddenly on the third of the month the empress was obliged to return to the imperial palace. This was a great disappointment, and at first I

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276. The high priestess of the Kamo Shrines was chosen at the beginning of each reign.

277. "Festive wands" refers to the auspicious hare sticks distributed at the New Year.

Material com direitos autorais

seriously thought that we would never know the outcome. "Well," said everyone (including Her Majesty), "it was all very delightful. What a shame we couldn't see it to the end!"

I determined then that if my original guess turned out to be correct, I would show Her Majesty the remaining snow, whatever happened. I realized that this would require special steps, so I took advantage of the confusion of packing and moving to summon a gardener who lived in a hut near the wall of the Empress's Office. When he came to the veranda where I was sitting, I told him to take extremely good care of the mountain. "Make sure it lasts until the fifteenth," I said, "and don't let any children climb up and scatter the snow. If you look after it really well and it lasts until the middle of the month, Her Majesty will give you a generous reward, and I too shall show you my gratitude." So saying, I gave him some cakes and other food that I had got from the reserve that was always kept in the kitchen for poor people.

The gardener beamed. "That will be quite simple, Madam," he said, "I shall certainly guard your mountain for you, though it may be difficult to stop the children from climbing. . . . " "If they refuse to obey," I said, "tell them whom they are dealing with!"

I then accompanied Her Majesty back to the palace and stayed there until the seventh. During this time I was so worried about the mountain that I was forever dispatching underservants, bathroom servants, and housekeepers with instructions for the gardener. On the seventh I sent him some of the leftovers from the Festival of Young Herbs; when the servants returned, I heard them laughing at the reverent way in which the gardener had received the gifts.

After I had gone home on the seventh, I was still greatly concerned about the mountain, and early each morning I sent someone to look at it. On the tenth my messenger delighted me by saying that it would last for another five days or so. On the night of the thirteenth, however, it rained very hard, and I thought with distress that now my mountain must surely have melted. I stayed awake all night, lamenting that it could not possibly survive another day, let alone the necessary two. The people who heard me laughed and said I was mad. As soon as there was a sound of stirring in the house, I got up and tried to arouse one of the maids. The lazy wench would not budge. Thoroughly annoyed, I sent another servant, who was already awake, to inspect the mountain. "Well, Madam," she told me on her return, "it is now about the size of a round straw cushion. The gardener has been looking after it very efficiently and has not let any children come near. It should last like this until tomorrow or even the next day. The gardener says that he is now confident of receiving his reward."

I was overjoyed and decided that with the arrival of the fifteenth, I should dash off a poem and send it to the empress together with some of the snow in a basket.

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Anxiously I awaited the following day, and before dawn I gave my maid a large chip basket,[278] telling her to fill the cover with snow from those parts of the mountain where it was still white. "Use a rake," I said, "and throw away all the dirty snow."

She was back almost at once with the cover of the chip basket dangling, still empty, from her hand. "It's gone," she announced. I was dumbfounded. The splendid poem that I had composed with such effort, thinking that soon it would be on everyone's lips, now seemed foolish and useless. "But how," I asked dejectedly, "can such a large heap of snow have melted overnight?"

"The gardener was wringing his hands," the maid said excitedly. "He told me that the snow was there until late last night and he was counting on his reward, but that now of course he would get nothing."

Just then a messenger arrived with a note from the empress asking whether the snow had lasted. Mortifying as it was, I had to reply that none was left. "Tell Her Majesty," I said, "that the snow, which the older women said would melt last month and in any case before New Year's Day, was still there yesterday at sunset. I don't think I did so badly. If it had actually lasted until today, my prediction would have been *too* accurate. I dare say that during the night someone removed the snow out of spite and flung it away."

When I returned to the palace on the twentieth, I discussed the matter with the empress and told her how amazed I had been by the maid's prompt return and by her news. "The cover was dangling in her hand," I said, "and she had put the box itself on her head like a hat. . . . I was planning to build a beautiful little snow mountain in the lid and to present it to Your Majesty with a fine poem written on white paper."

The empress burst out laughing and her ladies-in-waiting joined in. "I am afraid I have earned a heavy load of sin for having spoiled everything when it meant so much to you," she said. "To tell the truth, on the night of the fourteenth I sent some servants to the mountain with orders to destroy it and throw away what was left. Strange that in your reply to my note you guessed exactly what happened."

It appeared that when the empress's servants arrived at the mountain, the old gardener had come out, wringing his hands and begging them not to damage the snow. "We are acting on Her Majesty's orders," they had answered. "And don't tell anyone, or we shall tear down your hut for you." They then took all the snow and threw it over the wall at the south of the guard office of the Left Division. According to the servants' report, the mountain was still quite high and the snow would certainly have lasted until the twentieth. "In fact," said the empress, "I am afraid your mountain might very well have stood there until it started snowing again next winter." When His Majesty heard the story,

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278. A box with curved corners made of strips of wood.

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he commented to his senior courtiers, "Who would have thought of having such a strange contest?"

"Well," said the empress after she had told me all this, "now you can see that it is just the same as if you had actually won. So please let me hear your poem."

The ladies-in-waiting joined her in asking for my poem, but I felt very unhappy and replied, "After what I have just been told, why should I want to recite it?"

At that moment the emperor walked into the room and addressed me. "I have always regarded you as being like other people," he said, "but now I see what a remarkable woman you really are."

This only made me unhappier about my mountain, and I felt I was going to burst into tears. "Oh, how sad!" I exclaimed. "What a cruel world we live in! I remember how happy I was when it snowed on New Year's Day and the mountain started getting higher, but then Your Majesty said it had come at the wrong time and gave orders that all the snow should be swept away."

The emperor laughed. "The fact is," he said, "that she probably didn't want you to win."

Embarrassing Things (63)

While entertaining a visitor, one hears some servants chatting without any restraint in one of the back rooms. It is embarrassing to know that one's visitor can overhear. But how to stop them?

A man whom one loves gets drunk and keeps repeating himself.

To have spoken about someone not knowing that he could overhear. This is embarrassing even if it is a servant or some other completely insignificant person.

To hear one's servants making merry. This is equally annoying if one is on a journey and staying in cramped quarters or at home and hears the servants in a neighboring room.

Parents, convinced that their ugly child is adorable, pet him and repeat the things he has said, imitating his voice.

An ignoramus who in the presence of some learned person puts on a knowing air and converses about men of old.

A man recites his own poems (not especially good ones) and tells one about the praise they have received—most embarrassing.

Lying awake at night, one says something to one's companion, who simply goes on sleeping.

In the presence of a skilled musician, someone plays a zither just for his own pleasure and without tuning it.

A son-in-law who has long since stopped visiting his wife runs into his father-in-law in a public place.

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Things That Give a Hot Feeling (78)

The hunting costume of the head of a guards escort.

A patchwork surplice.

The captain in attendance at the imperial games.

An extremely fat person with a lot of hair.

A zither bag.

A holy teacher performing a rite of incantation at noon in the Sixth or Seventh Month. Or at the same time of the year a coppersmith working in his foundry.

Things That Have Lost Their Power (80)

A large boat that is high and dry in a creek at ebb tide.

A woman who has taken off her false locks to comb the short hair that remains.

A large tree that has been blown down in a gale and lies on its side with its roots in the air.

The retreating figure of a sumo wrestler who has been defeated in a match.[279]

A man of no importance reprimanding an attendant.

An old man who removes his hat, uncovering his scanty topknot.

A woman, who is angry with her husband about some trifling matter, leaves home and goes somewhere to hide. She is certain that he will rush about looking for her; but he does nothing of the kind and shows the most infuriating indifference. Since she cannot stay away forever, she swallows her pride and returns.

Awkward Things (81)

One has gone to a house and asked to see someone; but the wrong person appears, thinking that it is he who is wanted; this is especially awkward if one has brought a present.

One has allowed oneself to speak badly about someone without really intending to do so; a young child who has overheard it all goes and repeats what one has said in front of the person in question.

Someone sobs out a pathetic story. One is deeply moved; but it so happens that not a single tear comes to one's eyes—most awkward. Although one makes one's face look as if one is going to cry, it is no use: not a single tear will come. Yet there are times when, having heard something happy, one feels the tears streaming out.

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279. Sumo-wrestling tournaments usually took place in the imperial palace every year at the end of the Seventh Month, with skilled fighters being specially recruited from the provinces.

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Adorable Things (99)

The face of a child drawn on a melon.[280]

A baby sparrow that comes hopping up when one imitates the squeak of a mouse; or again, when one has tied it with a thread round its leg and its parents bring insects or worms and pop them in its mouth—delightful!

A baby of two or so is crawling rapidly along the ground. With his sharp eyes he catches sight of a tiny object and, picking it up with his pretty little fingers, takes it to show to a grown-up person.

A child, whose hair has been cut like a nun's,[281] is examining something; the hair falls over his eyes, but instead of brushing it away he holds his head to the side. The pretty white cords of his trouser skirt are tied round his shoulders, and this too is most adorable.

A young palace page, who is still quite small, walks by in ceremonial costume.

One picks up a pretty baby and holds him for a while in one's arms; while one is fondling him, he clings to one's neck and then falls asleep.

The objects used during the Display of Dolls.

One picks up a tiny lotus leaf that is floating on a pond and examines it. Not only lotus leaves, but little hollyhock flowers, and indeed all small things, are most adorable.

An extremely plump baby, who is about a year old and has lovely white skin, comes crawling toward one, dressed in a long gauze robe of violet with the sleeves tucked up.

A little boy of about eight who reads aloud from a book in his childish voice.

Pretty, white chicks who are still not fully fledged and look as if their clothes are too short for them; cheeping loudly, they follow one on their long legs or walk close to the mother hen.

Duck eggs.

An urn containing the relics of some holy person.

Wild pinks.

When I First Went into Waiting (116)

When I first went into waiting at Her Majesty's court, so many different things embarrassed me that I could not even add them up and I was always on the verge of tears. As a result I tried to avoid appearing before the empress except at night, and even then I stayed hidden behind a three-foot curtain of state.

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280. Drawing faces on melons was a popular pastime, especially for women and children.

281. That is, cut at shoulder length.

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On one occasion Her Majesty brought out some pictures and showed them to me, but I was so ill at ease that I could hardly stretch out my hand to take them. She pointed to one picture after another, explaining what each represented. Since the lamp had been put on a low tray-stand, one could view the pictures even better than in the daytime, and every hair of my head was clearly visible. I managed to control my embarrassment and had a proper look. It was a very cold time of the year, and when Her Majesty gave me the paintings I could hardly see her hands;[282] but from what I made out, they were of a light pink hue that I found extraordinarily attractive. I gazed at the empress with amazement. Simple as I was and unaccustomed to such wonderful sights, I did not understand how a being like this could possibly exist in our world.

At dawn I was about to hurry back to my room when Her Majesty said, "Even the god of Kazuraki would stay a little longer." So I sat down again, but I leaned forward sideways in such a way that Her Majesty could not see me directly and kept the lattice shut. One of the ladies who came into the room noticed this and said that it should be opened. A servant heard her and started toward it, but Her Majesty said, "Wait. Leave the lattice as it is." The two women went out, laughing to each other.

Her Majesty then asked me various questions and finally said, "I am sure you want to return to your room. So off you go! But be sure to come again this evening—and early too."

As soon as I had crept out of Her Majesty's presence and was back in my room, I threw open all the lattices and looked out at the magnificent snow.

During the day I received several notes from Her Majesty telling me to come while it was still light. "The sky is clouded with snow," she wrote, "and no one will be able to see you clearly."

Noticing my hesitation, the lady in charge of my room[283] urged me, saying, "I don't know how you can stay shut up like this all day long. Her Majesty has granted you the extraordinary good fortune of being admitted into her presence, and she must certainly have her reasons. To be unresponsive to another person's kindness is a most hateful way to behave." This was enough to make me hurry back to the empress; but I was overcome with embarrassment, and it was not easy for me.

On my way I was delighted to see the snow beautifully piled on top of the fire huts. When I entered Her Majesty's room, I noticed that the usual square brazier was full to the brim with burning charcoal and that no one was sitting next to it. The empress herself was seated in front of a round brazier made of

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282. Because they were covered by her sleeves. In the winter the long sleeves of Heian robes served as a sort of muff.

283. The lady-in-waiting in charge of a number of younger maids of honor who lived in the same room or set of rooms.

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shen[284] wood and decorated with pear-skin lacquer. She was surrounded by a group of high-ranking ladies who were in constant attendance on her. In the next part of the room a tightly packed row of ladies-in-waiting sat in front of a long, rectangular brazier, with their Chinese jackets worn in such a way that they trailed on the floor. Observing how experienced they were in their duties and how easily they carried them out, I could not help feeling envious. There was not a trace of awkwardness in any of their movements as they got up to deliver notes to Her Majesty from the outside and sat down again by the brazier, talking and laughing to one another. When would I ever be able to manage like that, I wondered nervously. Still farther in the back of the room sat a small group of ladies who were looking at pictures together.

After a while I heard the voices of outrunners loudly ordering people to make way. "His Excellency the chancellor is coming," said one of the ladies, and they all cleared away their scattered belongings. I retired to the back of the room; but despite my modesty, I was curious to see the great man in person and I peeped through a crack at the bottom of the curtain of state where I was sitting. It turned out that it was not Michitaka but his son, Korechika, the major counselor. The purple of his court cloak and trousers looked magnificent against the white snow. "I should not have come," he said, standing next to one of the pillars, "because both yesterday and today are days of abstinence. But it has been snowing so hard that I felt bound to call and find out whether you were all right."

"How did you manage?" said Her Majesty. "I thought that all the paths were buried."

"Well," replied Korechika, "it occurred to me that I might move your heart."[285]

Could anything surpass this conversation between the empress and her brother? This was the sort of exchange that is so eloquently described in romances; and the empress herself, arrayed in a white dress, a robe of white Chinese damask, and two more layers of scarlet damask, over which her hair hung down loosely at the back, had a beauty that I had seen in paintings but never in real life: it was all like a dream.

Korechika joked with the ladies-in-waiting, and they replied without the slightest embarrassment, freely arguing with him and contradicting his remarks when they disagreed. I was absolutely dazzled by it all and found myself blushing without any particular reason. Korechika ate a few pieces of fruit and told one of the servants to offer some to the empress. He must have asked who was

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284. A region in China that produced a type of aromatic wood imported into Japan and used for making braziers, and so forth.

285. From a poem by Taira no Kanemori: "Here in my mountain home the snow is deep and the paths are buried. Truly would he move my heart—the man who came today."

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behind the curtain of state and one of the ladies must have told him that it was I, for he stood up and walked to the back of the room. At first I thought he was leaving, but instead he came and sat very close to me; he began to talk about various things he had heard about me before I came into waiting and asked whether they were true. I had been embarrassed enough when I had been looking at him from a distance with the curtain of state between us; now that we were actually facing each other I felt extremely stupid and could hardly believe that this was really happening to me.

In the past, when I had gone to watch imperial processions and the like, Korechika had sometimes glanced in the direction of my carriage; but I had always pulled the inner blinds close together and hidden my face behind a fan for fear that he might see my silhouette through the blinds. I wondered how I could ever have chosen to embark on a career for which I was so ill suited by nature. What on earth should I say to him? I was bathed in sweat and altogether in a terrible state. To make matters worse, Korechika now seized the fan behind which I had prudently hidden myself, and I realized that my hair must be scattered all over my forehead in a terrible mess; no doubt everything about my appearance revealed the embarrassment I felt at that moment.

I had hoped Korechika would leave quickly, but he showed no sign of doing so; instead he sat there, toying with my fan and asking who had done the paintings on it. I kept my head lowered and pressed the sleeve of my Chinese jacket to my face—so tightly indeed, that bits of powder must have stuck to it, making my complexion all mottled.

The empress, who no doubt realized how desperately I wanted Korechika to leave, turned to him and said, "Look at this notebook. Whose writing do you suppose it is?" I was relieved to think that now he would finally go; but instead he asked her to have the book brought to him so that he could examine it. "Really," she said. "You can perfectly well come here yourself and have a look." "No I can't," he replied. "'Shōnagon has got hold of me and won't let go." It was a very fashionable sort of joke but hardly suited to my rank or age, and I felt terribly ill at ease. Her Majesty held up the book, in which something had been written in a cursive script, and looked at it. "Well indeed," said Korechika, "whose can it be? Let's show it to Shōnagon. I am sure she can recognize the handwriting of anyone in the world." The aim of all these absurd remarks, of course, was to draw me out.

As if a single gentleman were not enough to embarrass me, another one now arrived, preceded by outrunners who cleared the way for him. This gentleman too was wearing a court cloak, and he looked even more splendid than Korechika. He sat down and started telling some amusing stories, which delighted the ladies-in-waiting. "Oh yes," they said, laughing, "we saw Lord So-and-so when he was—." As I heard them mention the names of one senior courtier after another, I felt they must be talking about spirits or heavenly beings who had descended to earth. Yet, after some time had passed and I had grown

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accustomed to court service, I realized that there had been nothing very impressive about their conversation. No doubt these same ladies, who talked so casually to Lord Korechika, had been just as embarrassed as I was when they first came into waiting but had little by little become used to court society until their shyness had naturally disappeared.

The empress spoke to me for a while and then asked, "Are you really fond of me?" "But Your Majesty," I replied, "how could I possibly not be fond of you?" Just then someone sneezed loudly in the Table Room. "Oh dear!" said the empress. "So you're telling a lie.[286] Well, so be it." And she retired into the back of the room.

To think that Her Majesty believed I was lying! If I had said that I was *fairly* fond of her, that would have been untrue. The real liar, I thought, was the sneezer's nose. Who could have done such a terrible thing? I dislike sneezes at the best of times, and whenever I feel like sneezing myself I deliberately smother it. All the more hateful was it that someone should have sneezed at this moment. But I was still far too inexperienced to say anything that might have repaired the damage, and since the day was dawning, I retired to my room. As soon as I arrived, a servant brought me an elegant-looking letter, written on fine, smooth paper of light green. "This is what Her Majesty feels," I read.

> How, if there were no God Tadasu in the sky,
> and none to judge what is the truth and what a lie,
> how should I know which words were falsely said?

My emotions were a jumble of delight and dismay, and once again I wished I could find out who had sneezed on the previous night. "Please give Her Majesty the following reply," I said, "and help me make up for the harm that has been done.

> 'A simple sneeze might give the lie
> To one whose love is small,
> But sad indeed that she who truly loves,
> Should suffer from so slight a thing!

The curse of God Shiki[287] is of course very terrible.'"

Even after I had sent my reply I still felt most unhappy and wondered why someone should have had to sneeze at such an inopportune moment.

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286. Sneezing, in Heian Japan, suggested that the last person who had spoken was not telling the truth.

287. Shiki was the name of a demon invoked by magicians and other practitioners of the occult when they wished to put a curse on someone.

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To Feel That One Is Disliked by Others (143)

To feel that one is disliked by others is surely one of the saddest things in the world, and no one, however foolish, could wish such a thing on himself. Yet everywhere, whether it be in the palace or at home in the bosom of the family, there are some people who are naturally liked and others who are not.

Not only among people of good birth, where it goes without saying, but even among commoners, children who are adored by their parents naturally attract the attention of outsiders, and everyone makes a great fuss over them. If they are attractive children, it is only natural that their parents should dote on them. How could it be otherwise? But if the children have nothing particular to recommend them, one can only assume that such devotion comes merely from the fact of being parents.

I imagine that there can be nothing so delightful as to be loved by everyone—one's parents, one's master, and all the people with whom one is on close terms.

Sympathy Is the Most Splendid of All Qualities (145)

Sympathy is the most splendid of all qualities. This is especially true when it is found in men, but it also applies to women. Compassionate remarks, of the type "How sad for you!" to someone who has suffered a misfortune or "I can imagine what he must be feeling" about a man who has had some sorrow, are bound to give pleasure, however casual and perfunctory they may be. If one's remark is addressed to someone else and repeated to the sufferer, it is even more effective than if one makes it directly. The unhappy person will never forget one's kindness and will be anxious to let one know how it has moved him.

If it is someone who is close to one and who expects sympathetic inquiries, he will not be especially pleased, since he is merely receiving his due; but a friendly remark passed on to less intimate people is certain to give pleasure. This all sounds simple enough, yet hardly anyone seems to bother. Altogether it seems as if men and women with good heads rarely have good hearts. Yet I suppose there must be some who are both clever and kind.

Pleasing Things (148)

Finding a large number of tales that one has not read before. Or acquiring the second volume of a tale whose first volume one has enjoyed. But often it is a disappointment.

Someone has torn up a letter and thrown it away. Picking up the pieces, one finds that many of them can be fitted together.

One has had an upsetting dream and wonders what it can mean. In great anxiety one consults a dream interpreter, who informs one that it has no special significance.

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A person of quality is holding forth about something in the past or about a recent event that is being widely discussed. Several people are gathered round him, but it is oneself that he keeps looking at as he talks.

A person who is very dear to one has fallen ill. One is miserably worried about him even if he lives in the capital and far more so if he is in some remote part of the country. What a pleasure to be told that he has recovered!

I am most pleased when I hear someone I love being praised or being mentioned approvingly by an important person.

A poem that someone has composed for a special occasion or written to another person in reply is widely praised and copied by people in their notebooks. Although this is something that has never yet happened to me, I can imagine how pleasing it must be.

A person with whom one is not especially intimate refers to an old poem or story that is unfamiliar. Then one hears it being mentioned by someone else and one has the pleasure of recognizing it. Still later, when one comes across it in a book, one thinks, "Ah, this is it!" and feels delighted with the person who first brought it up.

I feel very pleased when I have acquired some Michinoku paper or some white, decorated paper or even plain paper if it is nice and white.

A person in whose company one feels awkward asks one to supply the opening or closing line of a poem. If one happens to recall it, one is very pleased. Yet often on such occasions one completely forgets something that one would normally know.

I look for an object that I need at once, and I find it. Or again, there is a book that I must see immediately; I turn everything upside down, and there it is. What a joy!

When one is competing in an object match[288] (it does not matter what kind), how can one help being pleased at winning?

I greatly enjoy taking in someone who is pleased with himself and who has a self-confident look, especially if he is a man. It is amusing to observe him as he alertly waits for my next repartee; but it is also interesting if he tries to put me off my guard by adopting an air of calm indifference as if there were not a thought in his head.

I realize that it is very sinful of me, but I cannot help being pleased when someone I dislike has a bad experience.

It is a great pleasure when the ornamental comb that one has ordered turns out to be pretty.

I am more pleased when something nice happens to a person I love than when it happens to myself.

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288. Literally, "comparison of objects": a game played by two teams, left and right. Among the "objects" used in these games were flowers, roots, seashells, birds, insects, fans, and paintings.

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Entering the empress's room and finding that ladies-in-waiting are crowded round her in a tight group, I go next to a pillar that is some distance from where she is sitting. What a delight it is when Her Majesty summons me to her side so that all the others have to make way!

One Day, When the Snow Lay Thick on the Ground (157)

One day, when the snow lay thick on the ground and it was so cold that all the lattices had been closed, I and the other ladies were sitting with Her Majesty, chatting and poking the embers in the brazier.

"Tell me, Shōnagon," said the empress, "how is the snow on Mount Hsiang-lu?"[289]

I told the maid to raise one of the lattices and then rolled up the blind all the way. Her Majesty smiled. I was not alone in recognizing the Chinese poem she had quoted; in fact all the ladies knew the lines and had even rewritten them in Japanese. Yet no one but me had managed to think of it instantly.

"Yes indeed," people said when they heard the story. "She was born to serve an empress like ours."

This Book (185)

It is getting so dark that I can scarcely go on writing, and my brush is all worn out. Yet I should like to add a few things before I end.

I wrote these notes at home when I had a good deal of time to myself and thought no one would notice what I was doing. Everything that I have seen and felt is included. Since much of it might appear malicious and even harmful to other people, I was careful to keep my book hidden. But now it has become public, which is the last thing I expected.

One day Lord Korechika, the minister of the center, brought the empress a bundle of notebooks. "What shall we do with them?" Her Majesty asked me. "The emperor has already made arrangements for copying the 'Records of the Historian.'"[290]

"Let me make them into a pillow,"[291] I said.

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289. The empress is referring to some famous lines in a poem by Bo Juyi: "The sun has risen in the sky, but I idly lie in bed. In my small tower-room the layers of quilts protect me from the cold. Leaning on my pillow, I wait to hear I-ai's temple bell. Pushing aside the blinds, I gaze upon the snow of Xianglu peak . . . "

290. The Chinese historical work *Shi ji* (J. *Shiki*).

291. A pillow book, a term referring to a collection of notebooks kept in some accessible but relatively private place and in which the author would from time to time record impressions, daily events, poems, letters, stories, ideas, descriptions of people, and the like.

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"Very well," said Her Majesty. "You may have them."

I now had a vast quantity of paper at my disposal, and I set about filling the notebooks with odd facts, stories from the past, and all sorts of other things, often including the most trivial material. On the whole I concentrated on things and people that I found charming and splendid; my notes also are full of poems and observations about trees and plants, birds and insects. I was sure that when people saw my book they would say, "It's even worse than I expected. Now one can really tell what she is like." After all, it is written entirely for my own amusement and I put things down exactly as they came to me. How could my casual jottings possibly bear comparison with the many impressive books that exist in our time? Readers have declared, however, that I can be proud of my work. This has surprised me greatly; yet I suppose it is not so strange that people should like it, for, as will be gathered from these notes of mine, I am the sort of person who approves of what others abhor and detests the things they like.

Whatever people may think of my book, I still regret that it ever came to light.

[Adapted from a translation by Ivan Morris]

FUJIWARA NO KINTŌ

Fujiwara no Kintō (955–1041), also known as Shijō no dainagon (Major Counselor of the Fourth Avenue), was one of the most prominent waka poets and aesthetic connoisseurs of his time. His influence on Heian court culture has sometimes been equated with the political power of Fujiwara no Michinaga (966–1027), his one-time rival and close relation. As described in *The Great Mirror* (*Ōkagami*), Kintō was particularly admired for his talents in the "Three Boats": excellence in Chinese poetry, waka, and music. Later recognized as one of the Thirty-six Poetic Immortals of Heian Japan, he compiled influential waka collections and wrote two treatises on waka composition: *The Essence of Poetry, Newly Selected* (*Shinsen zuinō*) and *Nine Levels of Poetic Excellence* (*Waka kuhon*).

JAPANESE AND CHINESE POEMS TO SING
(*WAKAN RŌEISHŪ*, CA. 1017–1021)

Japanese and Chinese Poems to Sing is a unique collection of three distinct kinds of poems: Chinese poems, kanshi (Chinese poems by Japanese poets), and waka. Regarded as the first and the most successful of this genre, the *Rōeishū* contains a total of 803 poems (234 Chinese, 353 kanshi, and 216 waka) representing a kaleidoscopic universe of poetic thought and imagery. The collection consists of two books. The first is divided into four large parts, one for each of the four seasons, which are further subdivided into various seasonal topics. For instance, the section on spring begins with

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"The First Day of Spring" and moves through such topics as "New Herbs," "The Third of the Third Month," "Plum Blossoms," and "Wisteria." The poems of the second book are arranged under miscellaneous topics such as "Clouds," "Wine," "Monks," "Emperors," and "Impermanence."

Compared with the *Kokinshū*, the *Rōeishū* has far fewer poems on the topic "Love" and many more on Chinese and Buddhist topics. Among anthologies of this type, called *ruidaishū*, or "collections of (poems on) similar topics," the *Rōeishū* is unique in including both Chinese and Japanese topics. Two-thirds of the Chinese couplets and more than half the waka in the *Rōeishū* appear in two earlier ruidaishū: *Senzai kaku* (*Fine Couplets for a Thousand Years*, ca. 925–957) and *Kokin waka rokujō* (*Six Volumes of Old and New Poetry*, late tenth century). This does not, however, mean that the *Rōeishū* is simply a stockpile of famous couplets and waka. Rather, Kintō selected the best according to his views of waka, which he expounds in *Shinsen zuinō* and *Waka kuhon*. For instance, what he describes there as *okashiki tokoro* (innovative phrases) or the important ideal of *yojō* (overtones) can be found in many of the *Rōeishū* poems, whether in Japanese or Chinese. Indeed, the *Rōeishū*, with its many outstanding couplets from Tang poetry, may have been the foundation for Kintō's poetics.

Among the 587 Chinese couplets in the *Rōeishū*, 136 are by Bo Juyi (772–846), who was known as Hakurakuten or Hakkyoi in Japanese and was the most popular and influential Chinese poet in Heian Japan. Only forty-three couplets are by Sugawara no Fumitoki, the most heavily represented kanshi poet, and twenty poems are by Ki no Tsurayuki, the premier waka poet. Bo Juyi became popular in early Heian Japan because of the comparative simplicity of his diction and because of his fame as one of the major poets of Tang China. Kintō's preference for Bo Juyi is even more noticeable toward the end of the second book, where the influence of Buddhist thought predominates. The collection concludes with the enigmatic topic "Whiteness." The Bo of Bo Juyi is a surname that means "white," a color suggesting purity and the emptiness of worldly phenomena.

As in the *Kokinshū*, the majority of waka in the *Rōeishū* have syntactic breaks after the second measure, resulting in the so-called 5–7 rhythm (5–7/5–7–5). The prosodic characteristics of the Chinese poems are more varied. The majority of Chinese verses in the *Rōeishū* are couplets of seven-character lines, with prominent syntactic and semantic parallelism. Syntactically, each line often is divided into a four-character upper measure and a three-character lower measure. In some couplets, however, the lines constitute single sentences (as in nos. 492 and 583), and other verses have irregular measures.

The *Rōeishū* was one of the most widely disseminated textbooks for poetry recitation, calligraphy, and waka composition. As its title suggests, the collection came to be used as a source book for chanting or singing poetry. In addition, its bilingual form made it a popular model for calligraphy, since it included both kana and *kanji* (Chinese character) texts. These practical features contributed to its popularity in the medieval period, when its unique mixture of Japanese and Chinese verses made it a source of familiar allusions for medieval storytellers and writers and contributed to the

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formation of the *wakan konkōbun* (mixed Chinese and Japanese) style adopted by composers of war tales such as *The Tales of the Heike* and the *Taiheiki* (*Chronicle of Great Peace*). The notion of impermanence, a prominent theme of the *Rōeishū*, is another reason for its frequent citation in medieval Buddhist tales and legends. It also was used as a primer for learning Chinese, along with such classical texts as *Mengqiu* (J. *Mōgyū*) and *Qianzi wen* (J. *Senji mon*). The poems translated here were chosen to show the variety of the *Rōeishū*, and most of them are alluded to or cited in other texts appearing in this anthology.

Book 1: Spring

Spring Night

28

haru no yo no	Darkness is futile
yami wa ayanashi	on a spring night;
mume no hana	plum blossoms,
iro koso miene	even if the color is invisible,
ka yawa kakururu	how can the scent be concealed?[292]

Ōshikōchi no Mitsune[293] (waka)

Crimson Plum Blossoms

100

kimi narade	If not to you,
tare ni ka misemu	to whom might I show
mume no hana	these plum blossoms?
iro o mo ka o mo	Their color, their scent,
shiru hito zo shiru	is known only by the knowing.[294]

Ki no Tomonori[295] (waka)

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292. The poem also appears in the *Kokinshū*, *Shinsen waka*, *Kokin waka rokujō*, and *Mitsune shū*. With its unusual personification of darkness and witty logic, the poem exemplifies what Kintō called *okashiki tokoro* (innovative phrase).

293. Late ninth to early tenth century. Author of sixty poems in the *Kokinshū*, one of the compilers of the anthology, and, along with Tsurayuki, a master of compositional technique.

294. "To know their colors" suggests appreciating the beauty of the phenomenal world. "To know their scent" suggests insight into profundities beyond apprehension by the senses. This poem, which also appears in the *Kokinshū*, *Kokin waka rokujō*, and *Tomonori shū*, is cited in the "A Branch of Plum" chapter of *The Tale of Genji* (SNKBZ 20:408), when Genji is searching for fine incense. Having ordered different incenses prepared, he asks his younger brother, "To whom would I show these [*tare ni ka misemu*]?" His brother modestly suggests, "I am not one who knows [*shiru hito ni wa arazu ya*]" but proves himself capable of the task.

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Fifteenth Night—With Harvest Moon

242

sangoya chu
shingetsu no iro
jisenri gai
kojin no kokoro

On the fifteenth night,
the glow of a new moon.
Two thousand miles away,
the heart of my friend.[296]

Bo Juyi (Chinese poem)

Book 2

Mountains

492

shōchi wa motoyori sademeru shu nashi
ōyoso yama wa yama o aisuruhito ni zokusu

A fine view has no particular master.

Mountains belong to those who love mountains.[297]

Bo Juyi (Chinese poem)

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295. Ki no Tomonori, of the same clan as Tsurayuki, was another of the four poets ordered to compile the *Kokinshū*. He died early in the tenth century, before the collection was completed, as is known from a poem mourning his death which was included in the anthology.

296. *Sangoya* (the night of three-five) is the fifteenth day of the Eighth Month, the night of the harvest moon. *Shingetsu* (new moon) refers to the newly risen moon in the eastern sky. The couplet was part of a longer poem by Bo Juyi in book 14 of *Bo Juyi's Collected Works* (J. *Hakushi monjū*, Ch. *Boshi wenji*), where it is preceded by a preface and a first couplet: "On the night of the fifteenth of the Eighth Month [in 810], I was on duty alone in the Forbidden City. Facing the moon, I could not help thinking about Yuan Jiu. 'Flanked by the silver platforms and golden gates, the evening grows deeper. Alone in my lodgings, I gazed up at the face of the moon and thought about my post in the Hàn-lin Academy.'" Yuan Zhen, a poet and friend of Bo Juyi, was exiled to the Jiangling region (two thousand miles from Chang'an) in the Third Month of the same year. Twelve couplets composed by Yuan are also included in the *Rōeishū*. Imagining his friend's familiar face in the bright moon, Bo Juyi remembers the past and thinks of his friend's suffering, beginning with the death of his wife in the previous year. Contrasting the smaller number (fifteen or three-five) with the larger "two thousand," the second couplet expresses Bo Juyi's compassion for his friend. This couplet became a favorite for recitation and was frequently quoted in monogatari, war tales (such as *Genpei jōsuiki*), nō plays (such as *Kogō*, *Obasute*, and *Tōru*), and songs, eventually becoming the most famous Tang couplet in Japanese literature. In the "Suma" chapter of *The Tale of Genji*, Genji, longing for the capital, "gazes at the face of the moon" and recites, "Two thousand miles away, the heart of my friend."

297. The couplet appears in book 13 of *Bo Juyi's Collected Works* with the subtitle "Upon my visit to Yunjung Temple, humbly presented to the landlords of Thirty-six (Birds and Beasts)" and is preceded by a first couplet: "In the depths towering mountains, on the pathways of Yun ju (Clouds Rest) passing heavily trodden flowers, I alone feel regret for spring." The thirty-six birds

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Residences of Immortals—With Daoists and Recluses

Senka (house of an immortal) also means "an immortal." Each of the fourteen verses in this section (three Chinese, ten kanshi, and one waka) expresses the poet's wonder at the ineffable attainments of immortals, which can be represented only by sketches of their way of living.

546

tansō michi natte
senshitsu shizuka nari

The arts of elixir and cauldron attained,
the immortal's chamber falls silent.

sanchū no keishoku wa
gekka tareri

Its light suffuses the mountain
as the moon sinks slowly.

547

sekishō hora ni todomatte
arashi munashiku harau

In a cave a stone bench left behind,
rough winds sweep it in vain.

gyokuan hayashi ni nageutte
tori hitori naku

In the forests a jade table abandoned,
a bird cries alone.

548

tōri mono iwazu
haru ikubakuka kurenuru

Peach and plum blossoms do not speak:
how many springs have come and gone?

enka atonashi
tareka sumishi

Spring mists leave no traces:
who once lived here?

549

ōkyō hitotabi satte
kumo nagaku tae

Since Prince Qiao[298] left,
the clouds have long vanished.

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and beasts (Ch. *sanshi-liu qin*) are the symbols of the old Chinese yin–yang belief that each hour is guarded by a master animal and its two auxiliary animals. The original Chinese poem disparages landowners and their selfish hoarding of the beautiful land of Yun ju. The aphoristic *Rōeishū* couplet thus implicitly criticizes landowners who do not love their land. In describing his carefree life as a hermit in *Hōjōki* (SNKBT 39:22) the author notes: "When it is sunny, I climb up the peaks of mountains, look over the sky of my hometown far in the distance, and look at the villages of Kohatayama, Fushimi, Toba, and Hatsukashi. Since scenic places are originally owned by no one person, I am free to enjoy myself without interference."

298. The prince of King Ling of Zhou. A legendary player of the *sheng*, who is said to have disappeared one day into a mountain to become a Daoist immortal.

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itsuka shō no koe
kokei ni kaeran

Some day the sound of his reed pipes[299]
will return to this old valley.[300]

Sugawara no Fumitoki[301] (kanshi)

Mountain Residences

555

ranshō no hana no toki
kinchō no moto

While flowers bloom at the Orchid Bureau,
you bask beneath brocade curtains.

rozan no ame no yo
sōan no uchi

On Mount Lu a night of rain
here in my thatched hut.[302]

Bo Juyi (Chinese poem)

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299. *Sheng*, J. *shō*, a traditional Chinese wind instrument with a set of reed pipes.

300. These four couplets (nos. 546–549), parts of one longer poem by Fumitoki, contrast the rich and exotic image of a Daoist in his "immortal's chamber" with the emptiness of the ruined house, in a pastoral tableau of the sun, mountains, and moon. In the third couplet, the expression "Peach and plum blossoms do not speak" is borrowed from "The Legend of General Li" in Sima Qian's *Records of the Historian* (*Shi ji*): "Although peach and plum blossoms do not speak, [people will gather to enjoy them, and] paths will form beneath them," but the original allegorical reading—that if one is virtuous, people will respect and follow—is no longer operative. Instead, Fumitoki transforms the image into a comment on the silent passage of time, implying "*Because* the peach and plum blossoms do not speak, we cannot know how many springs have come and gone." Fumitoki's preoccupation with impermanence (rather than with the "immortal's chamber") is one reason why this couplet found its way into a number of medieval narratives. In book 3 of *The Tales of the Heike*, Taira no Naritsune visits his deceased father's retreat in Toba for the first time after his death: "Although the old master no longer existed, these were the blossoms which would not forget spring. Standing by such blossoms, Naritsune recited the old poem: 'The peach and plum blossoms do not speak; how many springs have come and gone? Spring mists leave no traces: who once lived here?'" (SNKBT 44:158). See *Essays in Idleness* (*Tsurezuregusa*), sec. 25, in which the first half of no. 548 is integrated into a discussion of the impermanence of human existence.

301. Sugawara no Fumitoki (899–981) was the grandson of Sugawara no Michizane (845–903), the legendary scholar of Chinese literature. His grandfather's political defeat and exile affected the entire family, and Fumitoki struggled to make a career. Nevertheless, his poetic talent was soon recognized, and he earned respect as the best kanshi poet and scholar of Chinese literature of his time.

302. This is the second of a four-couplet poem written in 818, three years after Bo Juyi was demoted to a post in remote Jiangzhou, where Mount Lu is located. Orchid Bureau (J. Ranshō, Ch. Lansheng) was a popular name for the Department of State Affairs. In the original Chinese poem, Bo Juyi, while "staying alone in a thatched room in Mount Lu," thinks about the "three virtuous men" (possibly his friends in the capital city) walking "hand in hand" under "the red sky" of dusk. The *Rōeishū* poem sets up an ironic contrast between the two worlds. In section 78 of *The Pillow Book*, Sei Shōnagon recounts being asked by the secretary, Captain Fujiwara no Nobutada—one of the four grand counselors along with Kintō—to complement the Chinese verse: "While flowers bloom at the Orchid Bureau, you bask beneath brocade curtains." Sei Shōnagon proudly writes that without taking time to grind ink, she "took a chunk of cinder from the brazier" and wrote in Japanese: "Who would visit the thatched hut?" See the section on Fujiwara no Shunzei for a poem (*Shinkokinshū*, no. 201) that alludes to this verse: "Mountain cuckoo, add no tears to the rain that falls on this hut of grass where I long tonight for the past."

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Mountain Temple

583

sanzen sekai wa manako no mae ni tsuki
jūni innen wa kokoro no uchi ni munashi

The three-thousand-fold world exhausts itself before my eyes.
The twelve-link chain of causation becomes empty in my heart.[303]

Miyako no Yoshika[304] (kanshi)

Buddhist Matters

588

negawakuwa
konjyō sezoku monji no gō
kyōgen kigo no ayamari o motte

hirugaeshite
tōrai sese
san butsujō no in, ten hōrin no en to nasan.

I beseech you:
may these acts of writing,
and the errors of wild words and decorative phrases of my life
be reversed
for all future generations,
to honor the Law of the Buddha and aid in turning the wheel of his teachings.[305]

Bo Juyi (Chinese poem)

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303. Yoshika recited this poem when he visited Hōgon Temple on Chikubu Island near Lake Biwa. The term *sanzen sekai* (three-thousand-fold world), which appears in the Lotus Sutra, notably in the beginning of the famous chapter "The Parable of the Medicinal Herbs," refers to the unfathomable vastness of the universe in the Buddhistic cosmology. *Jūni innen* (twelvefold chain of causation) is another Buddhist term in the Lotus Sutra, referring to the nature of human existence. The couplet expresses the poet's wonder at the vastness of the universe, inspired by the sight of the great "sea" of Lake Biwa. The view of this magnificent lake made Yoshika realize that his own self—a microcosmos in its own light—was connected to such a universe and that karmic causation is empty of meaning, by contrast. This poem is cited in medieval texts such as *Fukuro zōshi* (ca. 1157), *Jikkinshō* (*Book of Ten Rules*, 1252), *Kokon chomonjū* (1254), *Senjūshō*, *Genpei jōsuiki*, and *Taiheiki*.

304. Miyako no Yoshika (834–879) was a renowned scholar of Chinese literature and a kanshi poet in the early Heian period. The *Rōeishū* contains fourteen of his kanshi poems.

305. Unlike the majority of couplets in the *Rōeishū*, these two lines were taken from Bo Juyi's postscript to *Luozhang Anthology* (of approximately eight hundred poems), which he dedicated to the Xiang shan Temple (J. Kōzanji) toward the end of his life in 840. Although these phrases come from a prose headnote in the poet's collection, they had a profound influence on Japanese literature, becoming a paradigm for understanding the relationship between literature and Buddhism. In this supplicatory statement, Juyi wishes that his "acts of writing" (*monji no gō*) and his errors of "wild words and decorative phrases" (*kyōgen kigo*) as a poet will be reversed and turned into a primary cause (*in*) "to honor the Law of the Buddha," and an ancillary cause (*en*), for "turning the wheel of his teachings." This idea of regarding literary activity as a means of devotion to the Buddha was welcome in the late Heian and medieval periods, when literature came to be

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Women of Pleasure

721

shiranamino
yosuru nagisa ni
yo o sugusu
ama no ko nareba
yado mo sadamezu

I spend my life
on shores where
white waves roll in:
a fisherman's child,
I have no home.[306]

Anonymous (waka)

Impermanence

789

mi o kansureba
kishi no hitai ni ne o karetaru
kusa

Seeing myself:
a rootless grass dangling on the edge of
a cliff.

inochi o ronzureba
e no hotori ni tsunagazaru fune.

Measuring my life:
an unmoored boat afloat at the mouth
of a river.[307]

Lai[308] (Chinese poem)

[Introduction and translations by Saeko Shibayama]

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regarded as incompatible with the Way of Buddhism. Bo Juyi's phrase *kyōgen kigo* (wild words and decorative phrases) was widely used by both those who championed literature and those who denounced it. It is cited in many medieval narratives—among them, *Eiga monogatari*, *The Tale of Sagoromo*, *Ryōjin hishō*, *The Tales of the Heike*, and *Kokon chōmonjū*—and nō plays. For more on *kyōgen kigo*, see the introduction to Mujū Ichien's *Collection of Sand and Pebbles*.

306. This poem, also appearing in the *Shinkokinshū*, is the only waka of the four poems in the section "Women of Pleasure." Unlike the women in the other three poems, this "woman of pleasure" is a vagrant "fisherman's child" who has no association with the urban pleasure quarters. The poem is alluded to in the "Evening Faces" (Yūgao) chapter of *The Tale of Genji*, when Genji asks the name of the woman in the "tiny and flimsy" house of "white flowers": "'Do please tell me now. This silence makes me feel that something awful might be coming.' 'Call me the fisherman's daughter.' Still hiding her name, she was like a little child" (Edward Seidensticker, trans., *The Tale of Genji* [New York: Knopf, 1976], 70).

307. The imagery of cliff and grass is based on an allegorical episode in the *Nehangyō* (Ch. *Niepanjing*, Nirvana Sutra), in which a man chased by a tiger runs over the edge of a cliff and dangles there, grasping a single blade of grass, barely saving his life. However, he will inevitably fall because a mouse is already chewing the root of the grass. The tiger in this anecdote symbolizes impermanence; the mouse represents passing time. In his poetic adaptation, Lai identifies himself with the severed blade of grass. The expression "a boat with no moorings" comes from the *Zhuangzi* ("Lieyuquan").

308. A Chinese poet. Little is known about his life.

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MURASAKI SHIKIBU

Murasaki Shikibu (d. ca. 1014) belonged to the northern branch of the Fujiwara lineage, the same branch that produced the regents. In fact, both sides of her family can be traced back to Fujiwara no Fuyutsugu (775–826), whose son Yoshifusa became the first regent (*sesshō*). Murasaki Shikibu's family line, however, subsequently declined and by her grandfather's generation had settled at the provincial governor, or *zuryō*, level. Murasaki Shikibu's father, Fujiwara no Tametoki (d. 1029), although eventually appointed governor of Echizen and then Echigo, had an undistinguished career as a bureaucrat. He was able, however, to make a name for himself as a scholar of Chinese literature and a poet.

Murasaki Shikibu was probably born sometime between 970 and 978, and in 996 she accompanied her father to his new post as provincial governor in Echizen, on the coast of the Japan Sea. A year or two later, she returned to the capital to marry Fujiwara no Nobutaka, a mid-level aristocrat who was old enough to be her father. She had a daughter named Kenshi, probably in 999, and Nobutaka died a couple of years later, in 1001. It is generally believed that Murasaki Shikibu started writing *The Tale of Genji* (*Genji monogatari*) after her husband's death, perhaps in response to the sorrow it caused her, and it was probably the reputation of the early chapters that resulted in her being summoned to the imperial court around 1005 or 1006. She became a lady-in-waiting (*nyōbō*) to Empress Shōshi, the chief consort of Emperor Ichijō and the eldest daughter of Fujiwara no Michinaga (966–1027), who had become regent. At least half of *Murasaki Shikibu's Diary* (*Murasaki Shikibu nikki*) is devoted to a long-awaited event in Michinaga's career—the birth of a son to Empress Shōshi in 1008—which would make Michinaga the grandfather of a future emperor.

Murasaki Shikibu was the sobriquet given to the author of *The Tale of Genji* when she was a lady-in-waiting at the imperial court and is not her actual name, which is not known. The name Shikibu probably comes from her father's position in the Shikibu-shō (Ministry of Ceremonial), and Murasaki may refer to the lavender color of the flower of her clan (Fujiwara, or Wisteria Fields), or it may have been borrowed from the name of the heroine of *The Tale of Genji*.

THE TALE OF GENJI (*GENJI MONOGATARI*)

The title of *The Tale of Genji* comes from the surname of the hero (the son of the emperor reigning at the beginning of the narrative), whose life and relationships with various women are described in the first forty-one chapters. *The Tale of Genji* is generally divided into three parts. The first part, consisting of thirty-three chapters, follows Genji's career from his birth through his exile and triumphant return to his rise to the pinnacle of society, focusing equally, if not more, on the fate of the various women with whom he becomes involved. The

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second part, chapters 34 to 41, from "New Herbs" (Wakana) to "The Wizard" (Maboroshi), explores the darkness that gathers over Genji's private life and that of his great love Murasaki, who eventually succumbs and dies, and ends with Genji's own death. The third part, the thirteen chapters following Genji's death, is concerned primarily with the affairs of Kaoru, Genji's putative son, and the three sisters (Ōigimi, Nakanokimi, and Ukifune) with whom Kaoru becomes involved. In the third part, the focus of the book shifts dramatically from the capital and court to the countryside and from a society concerned with refinement, elegance, and the various arts to an other-worldly, ascetic perspective—a shift that anticipates the movement of mid-Heian court culture toward the eremetic, religious literature of the medieval period.

The Tale of Genji both follows and works against the plot convention of the Heian monogatari in which the heroine, whose family has declined or disappeared, is discovered and loved by an illustrious noble. This association of love and inferior social status appears in the opening line of *Genji* and extends to the last relationship between Kaoru and Ukifune. In the opening chapter, the reigning emperor, like all Heian emperors, is expected to devote himself to his principal consort (the Kokiden lady), the lady with the highest rank, and yet he dotes on a woman of considerably lower status, a social and political violation that eventually results in the woman's death. Like the protagonist of *The Tales of Ise*, Genji pursues love where it is forbidden and most unlikely to be found or attained. In "Lavender" (Wakamurasaki), chapter 6, Genji discovers the young Murasaki, who has lost her mother and is in danger of losing her only guardian until Genji takes her into his home.

In Murasaki Shikibu's day, it would have been unheard of for a man of Genji's high rank to take a girl of Murasaki's low position into his own residence and marry her. In the upper levels of Heian aristocratic society, the man usually lived in his wife's residence, in either her parents' house or a dwelling nearby (as Genji does with Aoi, his principal wife). The prospective groom had high stakes in the marriage, for the bride's family provided not only a residence but other forms of support as well. When Genji takes into his house a girl (like the young Murasaki) with no backing or social support, he thus is openly flouting the conventions of marriage as they were known to Murasaki Shikibu's audience. In the monogatari tradition, however, this action becomes a sign of excessive, romantic love.

Some of the other sequences—involving Yūgao, the Akashi lady, Ōigimi, and Ukifune—start on a similar note. All these women come from upper- or middle-rank aristocratic families (much like that of the author herself) that have, for various reasons, fallen into social obscurity and must struggle to survive. The appearance of the highborn hero implies, at least for the attendants surrounding the woman, an opportunity for social redemption. Nonetheless, Murasaki Shikibu, much like her female predecessor, the author of the *Kagerō Diary*,

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concentrates on the difficulties that the woman subsequently encounters, in either dealing with the man or failing to make the social transition between her own social background and that of the highborn hero. The woman may, for example, be torn between pride and material need or between emotional dependence and a desire to be more independent, or she may feel abandoned and betrayed—all conflicts explored in *The Tale of Genji*. In classical Japanese poetry, such as that by Ono no Komachi, love has a similar fate: it is never about happiness or the blissful union of souls. Instead, it dwells on unfulfilled hopes, regretful partings, fears of abandonment, and lingering resentment.

The Tale of Genji is remarkable for how well it absorbs the psychological dimension of the *Kagerō Diary* and the social romance of the early monogatari into a deeply psychological narrative revolving around distinctive characters. Despite closely resembling the modern psychological novel, *The Tale of Genji* was not conceived and written as a single work and then distributed to a mass audience, as novels are today. Instead, it was issued in very small installments, chapter by chapter or sequence by sequence, to an extremely circumscribed, aristocratic audience over an extended period of time.

As a result, *The Tale of Genji* can be read and appreciated as Murasaki Shikibu's oeuvre, or corpus, as a closely interrelated series of texts that can be read either individually or as a whole and that is the product of an author whose attitudes, interests, and techniques evolved significantly with time and experience. For example, the reader of the Ukifune narrative can appreciate this sequence both independently and as an integral part of the previous narrative. *Genji* can also be understood as a kind of multiple bildungsroman in which a character is developed through time and experience not only in the life of a single hero or heroine but also over different generations, with two or more characters. Genji, for example, attains an awareness of death, mutability, and the illusory nature of the world through repeated suffering. By contrast, Kaoru, his putative son, begins his life, or rather his narrative, with a profound grasp and acceptance of these darker aspects of life. In the second part, in the "New Herbs" chapters, Murasaki has long assumed that she can monopolize Genji's affections and act as his principal wife. But Genji's unexpected marriage to the Third Princess (Onna san no miya) crushes these assumptions, causing Murasaki to fall mortally ill. In the last ten chapters, the Uji sequence, Ōigimi never suffers in the way that Murasaki does, but she quickly becomes similarly aware of the inconstancy of men, love, and marriage and rejects Kaoru, even though he appears to be an ideal companion.

Murasaki Shikibu probably first wrote a short sequence of chapters, perhaps beginning with "Lavender," and then, in response to her readers' demand, wrote a sequel or another related series of chapters, and so forth. Certain sequences, particularly the Broom Tree sequence (chapters 2–4, 6) and its sequels (chapters 15 and 16), which appear to have been inserted later, focus on women

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of the middle and lower aristocracy, as opposed to the main chapters of the first part, which deal with Fujitsubo and other upper-rank women related to the throne. The Tamakazura sequence (chapters 22–30), which is a sequel to the Broom Tree sequence, may be an expansion of an earlier chapter no longer extant. The only chapters whose authorship has been questioned are the three chapters following the death of Genji at the end of the second part. The following selections condense this extended narrative by omitting those chapters and sections that were later additions, of questionable authorship, or tangential to the lives of the central characters.

Main Characters

AKASHI EMPRESS (also AKASHI PRINCESS, AKASHI DAUGHTER): daughter of Genji by the Akashi lady, raised by Murasaki. Consort and later empress of the emperor reigning at the end of the tale. Mother of numerous princes and princesses, including Prince Niou.

AKASHI LADY: daughter of the ex-governor of Harima Province. Involved with Genji during his stay in Akashi, and the mother of his daughter. Eventually among the women installed in his Rokujō mansion.

AKASHI PRIEST: wealthy former governor of Harima Province. Saves Genji from a storm in Suma and offers him shelter in Akashi. Successfully arranges a match between Genji and his daughter.

AOI: Genji's first wife. Daughter of the Minister of the Left, sister of Tō no Chūjō, and mother of Genji's son Yūgiri. Dies shortly after giving birth, possessed by the spirit of the Rokujō lady.

BENNOKIMI: daughter of Kashiwagi's wet nurse, and later attendant to the Eighth Prince and the Uji princesses. Confidante of Kaoru.

BISHOP: (1) brother of Murasaki's grandmother. (2) *See* Yokawa, bishop of.

CAPTAIN: former son-in-law of Ono nun. Unsuccessfully courts Ukifune.

EIGHTH PRINCE: eighth son of the first emperor to appear in the tale. Genji's half brother. Father of Ōigimi, Nakanokimi, and Ukifune. Ostracized by court society for his part in Kokiden's plot to supplant the crown prince (the future Reizei emperor). Retreats to Uji, where he raises Ōigimi and Nakanokimi and devotes himself to Buddhism.

EMPEROR: (1) Emperor reigning at the beginning of the tale, also known as the Kiritsubo emperor owing to his love for the Kiritsubo lady (Genji's mother). Father of Genji, the Suzaku emperor, the Eighth Prince, and supposedly the Reizei emperor. (2) The fourth and last emperor in the tale, ascending to the throne after the Reizei emperor. Son of the Suzaku emperor. Takes the Akashi girl (Genji's daughter) as a consort. Father of Niou.

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FUJITSUBO: daughter of a former emperor, now deceased. Taken as a consort by the first emperor because of her resemblance to the dead Kiritsubo lady. Has a secret liaison with Genji and bears him a son (the future Reizei emperor). Elevated to empress but becomes a nun after the first emperor's death.

GENJI: son of the first emperor by the Kiritsubo lady. Given the surname Minamoto and reduced to commoner status after her death.

HYŌBU, PRINCE: brother of Fujitsubo and father of Murasaki.

JIJŪ: attendant to Ukifune.

KAORU: thought by the world to be Genji's son by the Third Princess but really Kashiwagi's son. Befriends the Eighth Prince and falls in love with his daughter Ōigimi but fails to make her his wife. Subsequently pursues his other daughters, Nakanokimi and Ukifune. Marries the Second Princess.

KASHIWAGI: eldest son of Tō no Chūjō. Falls in love and has an illicit affair with the Third Princess. Later dies a painful death. Father of Kaoru.

KIRITSUBO LADY: daughter of a senior counselor. Low-ranking consort beloved by the first emperor. Genji's mother.

KOJIJŪ: attendant to the Third Princess and helps Kashiwagi's courtship of her.

KOKIDEN: daughter of the Minister of the Right. First wife of the emperor reigning at the beginning of the tale and jealous rival of the Kiritsubo lady and Fujitsubo. Mother of the Suzaku emperor. Largely responsible for Genji's exile.

KOREMITSU: Genji's retainer.

MINISTER OF THE LEFT: father of Aoi and Tō no Chūjō. Becomes Genji's primary political supporter.

MINISTER OF THE RIGHT: father of Kokiden and Oborozukiyo and father-in-law of Tō no Chūjō. Opposes Genji and the Minister of the Left.

MURASAKI: Genji's great love. Daughter of Prince Hyōbu by a low-ranking wife, and niece of Fujitsubo.

NAKANOKIMI: second Uji princess, daughter of the Eighth Prince. Marries Niou and is installed by him at Nijō mansion. Bears him a son.

NIOU, PRINCE: beloved third son of the last emperor and the Akashi empress. Looked after by Murasaki until her death. Marries Nakanokimi and later Rokunokimi. Pursues Ukifune.

NUN: (1) maternal grandmother of Murasaki. (2) *See* Ono nun.

OBOROZUKIYO: daughter of the Minister of the Right and younger sister of Kokiden. Enters service of Suzaku emperor. Has an affair with Genji, which eventually leads to his exile.

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ŌIGIMI: eldest daughter of the Eighth Prince. Loved by Kaoru but refuses to marry him.

ŌMYŌBU: attendant to Fujitsubo.

ONO NUN: sister of the bishop of Yokawa. Takes care of Ukifune after her disappearance from Uji and attempts to marry her to the captain, her former son-in-law.

REIZEI EMPEROR: thought to be the son of the first emperor and Fujitsubo but actually Genji's son.

ROKUJŌ LADY: widow of former crown prince and neglected lover of Genji. Possesses Aoi as an evil spirit and contributes to her death. Retreats to Ise with her daughter, the high priestess. After her own death, possesses Murasaki.

ROKUNOKIMI: sixth daughter of Yūgiri. Becomes Niou's principal wife.

SECOND PRINCESS: (1) Second daughter of the Suzaku emperor, also known as Princess Ochiba. Principal wife of Kashiwagi. (2) Second daughter of the fourth and last emperor. Principal wife of Kaoru.

SHŌNAGON: attendant to Murasaki in her childhood.

SUZAKU EMPEROR: son of the first emperor by Kokiden. Recalls Genji from exile over his mother's protests and relinquishes the throne to the Reizei emperor. Father of the Third Princess, whom he marries to Genji, and of the emperor reigning at the end of the tale.

TAMAKAZURA: daughter of Tō no Chūjō by a low-ranking mistress. Discovered by Genji, who temporarily installs her in the Rokujō mansion and passes her off as his own daughter.

THIRD PRINCESS: daughter of the Suzaku emperor and the wife of Genji. Has a secret affair with Kashiwagi, becomes pregnant by him, and gives birth to Kaoru.

TŌ NO CHŪJŌ: son of the Minister of the Left and brother of Aoi. Genji's chief male companion in his youth. Son-in-law of the Minister of the Right. Father of Kashiwagi.

TOKIKATA: Niou's retainer.

UKIFUNE: unrecognized daughter of the Eighth Prince by an attendant. Half sister of Ōigimi and Nakanokimi. Raised in the East. Pursued by Kaoru and Niou. Tries to commit suicide but is saved by the bishop of Yokawa and taken to a convent at Ono, where she becomes a nun.

UKON: attendant to Ukifune.

YOKAWA, BISHOP OF: high priest of Yokawa and brother of Ono nun. Discovers Ukifune, looks after her, and gives her the tonsure.

YOSHIKIYO: Genji's retainer.

YŪGIRI: son of Genji by Aoi. Becomes the most powerful figure at court after Genji's death. Marries his daughter Rokunokimi to Niou.

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Places

NIJŌ: property inherited by Genji from his mother, the Kiritsubo lady. Murasaki's home in her youth. Residence of Niou and Nakanokimi after Murasaki and Genji die.

ROKUJŌ: lavish mansion built by Genji after his return from exile. Home to Murasaki, the Akashi lady, Tamakazura, and, later, the Third Princess. Taken over by Yūgiri after Genji's death.

SANJŌ: (1) Mansion of the Minister of the Left (Genji's father-in-law) and home of Aoi. (2) Home of Kaoru.

UJI: town near the Uji River, southeast of the capital. Home of the Eighth Prince and his daughters.

The Paulownia Court

In a certain reign there was a lady not of the first rank whom the emperor loved more than any of the others. The grand ladies with high ambitions thought her a presumptuous upstart, and lesser ladies were still more resentful. Everything she did offended someone. Probably aware of what was happening, she fell seriously ill and came to spend more time at home than at court. The emperor's pity and affection quite passed bounds. No longer caring what his ladies and courtiers might say, he behaved as if intent upon stirring gossip.

His court looked with very great misgiving upon what seemed a reckless infatuation. In China just such an unreasoning passion had been the undoing of an emperor and had spread turmoil through the land. As the resentment grew, the example of Yang Guifei[309] was the one most frequently cited against the lady.

She survived despite her troubles, with the help of an unprecedented bounty of love. Her father, a senior counselor, was no longer living. Her mother, an old-fashioned lady of good lineage, was determined that matters be no different for her than for ladies who with paternal support were making careers at court. The mother was attentive to the smallest detail of etiquette and deportment. Yet there was a limit to what she could do. The sad fact was that the girl was without strong backing, and each time a new incident arose she was next to defenseless.

It may have been because of a bond in a former life that she bore the emperor a beautiful son, a jewel beyond compare. The emperor was in a fever of impatience to see the child, still with the mother's family; and when, on the earliest day possible, he was brought to court, he did indeed prove to be a most

309. The beautiful concubine of the Tang emperor Xuanzong. The emperor's infatuation with her was viewed as the cause of the An Lu-Shan rebellion and led to her execution.

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Ladies' formal robe (*karaginu*) and pleated back skirt (*mo*).

marvelous babe. The emperor's eldest son was the grandson of the Minister of the Right. The world assumed that with this powerful support he would one day be named crown prince; but the new child was far more beautiful. On public occasions the emperor continued to favor his eldest son. The new child was a private treasure, so to speak, on which to lavish uninhibited affection.

The mother was not of such a low rank as to attend upon the emperor's personal needs. In the general view she belonged to the upper classes. He insisted on having her always beside him, however, and on nights when there was music or other entertainment he would require that she be present. Sometimes the two of them would sleep late, and even after they had risen he would not let her go. Because of his unreasonable demands she was widely held to have fallen into immoderate habits out of keeping with her rank.

With the birth of the son, it became yet clearer that she was the emperor's favorite. The mother of the eldest son began to feel uneasy. If she did not manage carefully, she might see the new son designated crown prince. She had come to court before the emperor's other ladies, she had once been favored over the others, and she had borne several of his children. However much her complaining might trouble and annoy him, she was one lady whom he could not ignore.

Though the mother of the new son had the emperor's love, her detractors were numerous and alert to the slightest inadvertency. She was in continuous torment, feeling that she had nowhere to turn. Her quarters were in the Kiritsubo.[310] The emperor had to pass the apartments of other ladies to reach hers,

310. The Paulownia Court, in the northeastern corner of the residential compound of the palace. The distance of the Kiritsubo lady's quarters from the emperor's, near the middle of the compound, is a reflection of her relatively low rank.

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and it must be admitted that their resentment at his constant comings and goings was not unreasonable. Her visits to the royal chambers were equally frequent. The robes of her women were in a scandalous state from trash strewn along bridges and galleries. Once some women conspired to have both doors of a gallery she must pass bolted shut, and so she found herself unable to advance or retreat. Her anguish over the mounting list of insults was presently more than the emperor could bear. He moved a lady out of rooms adjacent to his own and assigned them to the Kiritsubo lady and so, of course, aroused new resentment.

When the young prince reached the age of three,[311] the resources of the treasury and the stewards' offices were exhausted to make the ceremonial bestowing of trousers as elaborate as that for the eldest son. Once more there was malicious talk; but the prince himself, as he grew up, was so superior of mien and disposition that few could find it in themselves to dislike him. Among the more discriminating, indeed, were some who marveled that such a paragon had been born into this world.

In the summer the boy's mother, feeling vaguely unwell, asked that she be allowed to go home. The emperor would not hear of it. Since they were by now used to these indispositions, he begged her to stay and see what course her health would take. It was steadily worse, and then, suddenly, everyone could see that she was failing. Her mother came pleading that he let her go home. At length he agreed.

Fearing that even now she might be the victim of a gratuitous insult, she chose to go off without ceremony, leaving the boy behind. Everything must have an end, and the emperor could no longer detain her. It saddened him inexpressibly that he was not even permitted to see her off. A lady of great charm and beauty, she was sadly emaciated. She was sunk in melancholy thoughts, but when she tried to put them into words her voice was almost inaudible. The emperor was quite beside himself, his mind a confusion of things that had been and things that were to come. He wept and vowed undying love, over and over again. The lady was unable to reply. She seemed listless and drained of strength, as if she scarcely knew what was happening. Wanting somehow to help, the emperor ordered that she be given the honor of a hand-drawn carriage. He returned to her apartments and still could not bring himself to the final parting.

"We vowed that we would go together down the road we all must go. You must not leave me behind."

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311. All ages are by the Japanese count, not of the full years, but of the number of years in which one has lived, therefore one or two years above the full count.

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She looked sadly up at him. "If I had suspected that it would be so—" She was gasping for breath.

> "I leave you, to go the road we all must go.
> The road I would choose, if only I could, is the other."

It was evident that she would have liked to say more; but she was so weak that it had been a struggle to say even this much.

The emperor was wondering again if he might not keep her with him and have her with him to the end.

But a message came from her mother, asking that she hurry. "We have obtained the agreement of eminent ascetics to conduct the necessary services, and I fear that they are to begin this evening."

So, in desolation, he let her go. He passed a sleepless night.

He sent off a messenger and was beside himself with impatience and apprehension even before there had been time for the man to reach the lady's house and return. The man arrived to find the house echoing with laments. She had died at shortly past midnight. He returned sadly to the palace. The emperor closed himself up in his private apartments. He would have liked at least to keep the boy with him, but no precedent could be found for having him away from his mother's house through the mourning. The boy looked in bewilderment at the weeping courtiers, at his father too, the tears streaming over his face. The death of a parent is sad under any circumstances, and this one was indescribably sad.

But there must be an end to weeping, and orders were given for the funeral. If only she could rise to the heavens with the smoke from the pyre, said the mother between her sobs. She rode in the hearse with several attendants, and what must her feelings have been when they reached Mount Otaki?[312] It was there that the services were conducted with the utmost solemnity and dignity.

She looked down at the body. "With her before me, I cannot persuade myself that she is dead. At the sight of her ashes I can perhaps accept what has happened."

The words were rational enough, but she was so distraught that she seemed about to fall from the carriage. The women had known that it would be so and did what they could for her.

A messenger came from the palace with the news that the lady had been raised to the Third Rank, and presently a nunciary arrived to read the official order. For the emperor, the regret was scarcely bearable that he had not had the courage of his resolve to appoint her an imperial consort, and he wished to

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312. To the east of the city.

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make amends by promoting her one rank. There were many who resented even this favor. Others, however, of a more sensitive nature, saw more than ever what a dear lady she had been, simple and gentle and difficult to find fault with. It was because she had been excessively favored by the emperor that she had been the victim of such malice. The grand ladies were now reminded of how sympathetic and unassuming she had been. It was for just such an occasion, they remarked to one another, that the phrase "how well one knows" had been invented.

The days went dully by. The emperor was careful to send offerings for the weekly memorial services. His grief was unabated and he spent his nights in tears, refusing to summon his other ladies. His serving women were plunged into dew-drenched autumn.

There was one lady, however, who refused to be placated. "How ridiculous," said the lady of the Kokiden Pavilion, mother of his eldest son, "that the infatuation should continue even now."

The emperor's thoughts were on his youngest son even when he was with his eldest. He sent off intelligent nurses and serving women to the house of the boy's grandmother, where he was still in residence, and made constant inquiry after him.

The autumn tempests blew and suddenly the evenings were chilly. Lost in his grief, the emperor sent off a note to the grandmother. His messenger was a woman of middle rank called Myōbu, whose father was a guards officer. It was on a beautiful moonlit night that he dispatched her, a night that brought memories. On such nights he and the dead lady had played the koto for each other. Her koto had somehow had overtones lacking in other instruments, and when she would interrupt the music to speak, the words too carried echoes of their own. Her face, her manner—they seemed to cling to him, but with "no more substance than the lucent dream."

Myōbu visits the Kiritsubo lady's grieving mother and delivers a letter in which the emperor hints that he would like his young son to return to the palace.

Myōbu was much moved to find the emperor waiting up for her. Making it seem that his attention was on the small and beautifully planted garden before him, now in full autumn bloom, he was talking quietly with four or five women, among the most sensitive of his attendants. He had become addicted to illustrations by the emperor Uda for "The Song of Everlasting Sorrow"[313] and to poems by Ise and Tsurayuki on that subject, and to Chinese poems as well.

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313. By Bo Juyi, describing the grief of the Tang emperor Xuanzong upon the death of his concubine Yang Guifei. Uda reigned in the late ninth century and died in 931. Tsurayuki and Ise were active in the early tenth century. Ise was one of Uda's concubines.

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He listened attentively as Myōbu described the scene she had found so affecting. He took up the letter she had brought from the grandmother.

"I am so awed by this august message that I would run away and hide; and so violent are the emotions it gives rise to that I scarcely know what to say.

> "The tree that gave them shelter has withered and died.
> One fears for the plight of the *hagi*[314] shoots beneath."

A strange way to put the matter, thought the emperor; but the lady must still be dazed with grief. He chose to overlook the suggestion that he himself could not help the child.

He sought to hide his sorrow, not wanting these women to see him in such poor control of himself. But it was no use. He reviewed his memories over and over again, from his very earliest days with the dead lady. He had scarcely been able to bear a moment away from her while she lived. How strange that he had been able to survive the days and months since on memories alone. He had hoped to reward the grandmother's sturdy devotion, and his hopes had come to nothing.

"Well," he sighed, "she may look forward to having her day, if she will only live to see the boy grow up."

Looking at the keepsakes Myōbu had brought back, he thought what a comfort it would be if some wizard were to bring him, like that Chinese emperor, a comb from the world where his lost love was dwelling. He whispered:

> "And will no wizard search her out for me,
> that even he may tell me where she is?"

There are limits to the powers of the most gifted artist. The Chinese lady in the paintings did not have the luster of life. Yang Guifei was said to have resembled the lotus of the Sublime Pond, the willows of the Timeless Hall. No doubt she was very beautiful in her Chinese finery. When he tried to remember the quiet charm of his lost lady, he found that there was no color of flower, no song of bird, to summon her up. Morning and night, over and over again, they had repeated to each other the lines from "The Song of Everlasting Sorrow":

> "In the sky, as birds that share a wing.
> On earth, as trees that share a branch."

It had been their vow, and the shortness of her life had made it an empty dream.

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314. *Lespedeza japonica*, often called bush clover.

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Everything, the moaning of the wind, the humming of autumn insects, added to the sadness. But in the apartments of the Kokiden lady matters were different. It had been some time since she had last waited upon the emperor. The moonlight being so beautiful, she saw no reason not to have music deep into the night. The emperor muttered something about the bad taste of such a performance at such a time, and those who saw his distress agreed that it was an unnecessary injury. Kokiden was of an arrogant and intractable nature and her behavior suggested that to her the emperor's grief was of no importance.

The moon set. The wicks in the lamps had been trimmed more than once and presently the oil was gone. Still he showed no sign of retiring. His mind on the boy and the old lady, he jotted down a verse:

> "Tears dim the moon, even here above the clouds.[315]
> Dim must it be in that lodging among the reeds."

Calls outside told him that the guard was being changed. It would be one or two in the morning. People would think his behavior strange indeed. He at length withdrew to his bedchamber. He was awake the whole night through, and in dark morning, his thoughts on the blinds that would not open,[316] he was unable to interest himself in business of state. He scarcely touched his breakfast, and lunch seemed so remote from his inclinations that his attendants exchanged looks and whispers of alarm.

Not all voices were sympathetic. Perhaps, some said, it had all been foreordained, but he had dismissed the talk and ignored the resentment and let the affair quite pass the bounds of reason; and now to neglect his duties so—it was altogether too much. Some even cited the example of the Chinese emperor who had brought ruin upon himself and his country.[317]

The months passed and the young prince returned to the palace. He had grown into a lad of such beauty that he hardly seemed meant for this world—and indeed one almost feared that he might only briefly be a part of it. When, the following spring, it came time to name a crown prince, the emperor wanted very much to pass over his first son in favor of the younger, who, however, had no influential maternal relatives. It did not seem likely that the designation would pass unchallenged. The boy might, like his mother, be destroyed by immoderate favors. The emperor told no one of his wishes. There did after all seem to be a limit to his affections, people said; and Kokiden regained her confidence.

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315. "Even here in the palace."

316. Reference to "The Song of Everlasting Sorrow," a poem by Ise: "The jeweled blinds are drawn, the morning is dark. I had not thought I would not even dream."

317. The Tang emperor Xuanzong, who doted on his beautiful concubine Yang Guifei.

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The boy's grandmother was inconsolable. Finally, because her prayer to be with her daughter had been answered, perhaps, she breathed her last. Once more the emperor was desolate. The boy, now six, was old enough to know grief himself. His grandmother, who had been so good to him over the years, had more than once told him what pain it would cause her, when the time came, to leave him behind.

He now lived at court. When he was seven he went through the ceremonial reading of the Chinese classics, and never before had there been so fine a performance. Again a tremor of apprehension passed over the emperor—might it be that such a prodigy was not to be long for this world?

"No one need be angry with him now that his mother is gone." He took the boy to visit the Kokiden Pavilion. "And now most especially I hope you will be kind to him."

Admitting the boy to her inner chambers, even Kokiden was pleased. Not the sternest of warriors or the most unbending of enemies could have held back a smile. Kokiden was reluctant to let him go. She had two daughters, but neither could compare with him in beauty. The lesser ladies crowded about, not in the least ashamed to show their faces, all eager to amuse him, though aware that he set them off to disadvantage. I need not speak of his accomplishments in the compulsory subjects, the classics and the like. When it came to music his flute and koto made the heavens echo—but to recount all his virtues would, I fear, give rise to a suspicion that I distort the truth.

An embassy came from Korea. Hearing that among the emissaries was a skilled physiognomist, the emperor would have liked to summon him for consultation. He decided, however, that he must defer to the emperor Uda's injunction against receiving foreigners, and instead sent this favored son to the Kōro mansion,[318] where the party was lodged. The boy was disguised as the son of the grand moderator, his guardian at court. The wise Korean cocked his head in astonishment.

"It is the face of one who should ascend to the highest place and be father to the nation," he said quietly, as if to himself. "But to take it for such would no doubt be to predict trouble. Yet it is not the face of the minister, the deputy, who sets about ordering public affairs."

The moderator was a man of considerable learning. There was much of interest in his exchanges with the Korean. There were also exchanges of Chinese poetry, and in one of his poems the Korean succeeded most skillfully in conveying his joy at having been able to observe such a countenance on this the eve of his return to his own land, and sorrow that the parting must come so soon. The boy offered a verse that was received with high praise. The most splendid of gifts were bestowed upon him. The wise man was in return showered with gifts from the palace.

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318. In the southern part of the city.

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Somehow news of the sage's remarks leaked out, though the emperor himself was careful to say nothing. The Minister of the Right, grandfather of the crown prince and father of the Kokiden lady, was quick to hear, and again his suspicions were aroused. In the wisdom of his heart, the emperor had already analyzed the boy's physiognomy after the Japanese fashion and had formed tentative plans. He had thus far refrained from bestowing imperial rank on his son, and was delighted that the Korean view should so accord with his own. Lacking the support of maternal relatives, the boy would be most insecure as a prince without court rank, and the emperor could not be sure how long his own reign would last. As a commoner he could be of great service. The emperor therefore encouraged the boy in his studies, at which he was so proficient that it seemed a waste to reduce him to common rank. And yet—as a prince he would arouse the hostility of those who had cause to fear his becoming emperor. Summoning an astrologer of the Indian school, the emperor was pleased to learn that the Indian view coincided with the Japanese and the Korean; and so he concluded that the boy should become a commoner with the name Minamoto or Genji.

The months and the years passed and still the emperor could not forget his lost love. He summoned various women who might console him, but apparently it was too much to ask in this world for one who even resembled her. He remained sunk in memories, unable to interest himself in anything. Then he was told of the Fourth Princess, daughter of a former emperor, a lady famous for her beauty and reared with the greatest care by her mother, the empress. A woman now in attendance upon the emperor had in the days of his predecessor been most friendly with the princess, then but a child, and even now saw her from time to time.

"I have been at court through three reigns now," she said, "and never had I seen anyone who genuinely resembled my lady. But now the daughter of the empress dowager is growing up, and the resemblance is most astonishing. One would be hard put to find her equal."

Hoping that she might just possibly be right, the emperor asked most courteously to have the princess sent to court. Her mother was reluctant and even fearful, however. One must remember, she said, that the mother of the crown prince was a most willful lady who had subjected the Kiritsubo lady to open insults and presently sent her into a fatal decline. Before she had made up her mind she followed her husband in death, and the daughter was alone. The emperor renewed his petition. He said that he would treat the girl as one of his own daughters.

Her attendants and her maternal relatives and her older brother, Prince Hyōbu, consulted together and concluded that rather than languish at home she might seek consolation at court; and so she was sent off. She was called Fujitsubo. The resemblance to the dead lady was indeed astonishing. Because she was of such high birth (it may have been that people were imagining things) she seemed even more graceful and delicate than the other. No one could despise her for inferior rank, and the emperor need not feel shy about showing

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his love for her. The other lady had not particularly encouraged his attentions and had been the victim of a love too intense; and now, though it would be wrong to say that he had quite forgotten her, he found his affections shifting to the new lady, who was a source of boundless comfort. So it is with the affairs of this world.

Since Genji never left his father's side, it was not easy for this new lady, the recipient of so many visits, to hide herself from him. The other ladies were disinclined to think themselves her inferior, and indeed each of them had her own merits. They were all rather past their prime, however. Fujitsubo's beauty was of a younger and fresher sort. Though in her childlike shyness she made an especial effort not to be seen, Genji occasionally caught a glimpse of her face. He could not remember his own mother and it moved him deeply to learn, from the lady who had first told the emperor of Fujitsubo, that the resemblance was striking. He wanted to be near her always.

"Do not be unfriendly," said the emperor to Fujitsubo. "Sometimes it almost seems to me too that you are his mother. Do not think him forward, be kind to him. Your eyes, your expression: you are really so uncommonly like her that you could pass for his mother."

Genji's affection for the new lady grew, and the most ordinary flower or tinted leaf became the occasion for expressing it. Kokiden was not pleased. She was not on good terms with Fujitsubo, and all her old resentment at Genji came back. He was handsomer than the crown prince, her chief treasure in the world, well thought of by the whole court. People began calling Genji "the shining one." Fujitsubo, ranked beside him in the emperor's affections, became "the lady of the radiant sun."

It seemed a pity that the boy must one day leave behind his boyish attire; but when he reached the age of twelve he went through his initiation ceremonies and received the cap of an adult. Determined that the ceremony should be in no way inferior to the crown prince's, which had been held some years earlier in the Grand Hall, the emperor himself bustled about adding new details to the established forms. As for the banquet after the ceremony, he did not wish the custodians of the storehouses and granaries to treat it as an ordinary public occasion.

The throne faced east on the east porch, and before it were Genji's seat and that of the minister who was to bestow the official cap. At the appointed hour in midafternoon Genji appeared. The freshness of his face and his boyish coiffure were again such as to make the emperor regret that the change must take place. The ritual cutting of the boy's hair was performed by the secretary of the treasury. As the beautiful locks fell the emperor was seized with a hopeless longing for his dead lady. Repeatedly he found himself struggling to keep his composure. The ceremony over, the boy withdrew to change to adult trousers and descended into the courtyard for ceremonial thanksgiving. There was not a person in the assembly who did not feel his eyes misting over. The emperor

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was stirred by the deepest of emotions. He had on brief occasions been able to forget the past, and now it all came back again. Vaguely apprehensive lest the initiation of so young a boy bring a sudden aging, he was astonished to see that his son delighted him even more.

The Minister of the Left, who bestowed the official cap, had only one daughter, named Aoi, his chief joy in life. Her mother, the minister's first wife, was a princess of the blood. The crown prince had sought the girl's hand, but the minister thought rather of giving her to Genji. He had heard that the emperor had similar thoughts. When the emperor suggested that the boy was without adequate sponsors for his initiation and that the support of relatives by marriage might be called for, the minister quite agreed. . . .

The nuptial observances were conducted with great solemnity. The groom seemed to the minister and his family quite charming in his boyishness. The bride was older, and somewhat ill at ease with such a young husband.

The minister had the emperor's complete confidence, and his principal wife, the girl's mother, was the emperor's sister. Both parents were therefore of the highest standing. And now they had Genji for a son-in-law. The Minister of the Right, who as grandfather of the crown prince should have been without rivals, was somehow eclipsed. The Minister of the Left had numerous children by several ladies. One of the sons, named Tō no Chūjō, a very handsome lad by his principal wife, was already a guards lieutenant. Relations between the two ministers were not good; but the Minister of the Right found it difficult to ignore such a talented youth, to whom he offered the hand of his fourth and favorite daughter. His esteem for his new son-in-law rivaled the other minister's esteem for Genji. To both houses the new arrangements seemed ideal.

Constantly at his father's side, Genji spent little time at the Sanjō mansion of his bride. Fujitsubo was for him a vision of sublime beauty. If he could have someone like her—but in fact there was no one really like her. His bride too was beautiful, and she had had the advantage of every luxury; but he was not at all sure that they were meant for each other. The yearning in his young heart for the other lady was agony. Now that he had come of age, he no longer had his father's permission to go behind her curtains. On evenings when there was music, he would play the flute to her koto and so communicate something of his longing, and take some comfort from her voice, soft through the curtains. Life at court was for him much preferable to life at Sanjō. Two or three days at Sanjō would be followed by five or six days at court. For the minister, youth seemed sufficient excuse for this neglect. He continued to be delighted with his son-in-law.

The minister selected the handsomest and most accomplished of ladies to wait upon the young pair and planned the sort of diversions that were most likely to interest Genji. At the palace the emperor assigned him the apartments that had been his mother's and took care that her retinue was not dispersed. Orders were handed down to the offices of repairs and fittings to remodel the

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house that had belonged to the lady's family. The results were magnificent. The plantings and the artificial hills had always been remarkably tasteful, and the grounds now swarmed with workmen widening the lake. If only, thought Genji, he could have with him the lady he yearned for.

The sobriquet "the shining Genji," one hears, was bestowed upon him by the Korean.

The Broom Tree

"The shining Genji": it was almost too grand a name. Yet he did not escape criticism for numerous little adventures. It seemed indeed that his indiscretions might give him a name for frivolity, and he did what he could to hide them. But his most secret affairs (such is the malicious work of the gossips) became common talk. If, on the other hand, he were to go through life concerned only for his name and avoid all these interesting and amusing little affairs, then he would be laughed to shame by the likes of the lieutenant of Katano.[319]

Still a guards captain, Genji spent most of his time at the palace, going infrequently to the Sanjō mansion of his father-in-law. The people there feared that he might have been stained by the lavender of Kasugano.[320] Though in fact he had an instinctive dislike for the promiscuity he saw all around him, he had a way of sometimes turning against his own better inclinations and causing unhappiness.

The summer rains came, the court was in retreat, and an even longer interval than usual had passed since his last visit to Sanjō. Though the minister and his family were much put out, they spared no effort to make him feel welcome. The minister's sons were more attentive than to the emperor himself. Genji was on particularly good terms with Tō no Chūjō. They enjoyed music together and more frivolous diversions as well. Tō no Chūjō was of an amorous nature and not at all comfortable in the apartments which his father-in-law, the Minister of the Right, had at great expense provided for him. At Sanjō with his own family, on the other hand, he took very good care of his rooms, and when Genji came and went the two of them were always together. They were a good match for each other in study and at play. Reserve quite disappeared between them.

It had been raining all day. There were fewer courtiers than usual in the royal presence. Back in his own palace quarters, also unusually quiet, Genji pulled a lamp near and sought to while away the time with his books. He had Tō no Chūjō with him. Numerous pieces of colored paper, obviously letters, lay on a shelf. Tō no Chūjō made no attempt to hide his curiosity.

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319. Evidently the hero of a romance that has been lost.

320. *The Tales of Ise*, sec. 1: "Like the patterned robe dyed with young lavender from the fields of Kasuga, my tangled feelings know no bounds." Kasuga field is on the outskirts of Nara. Here as elsewhere lavender (*murasaki*) suggests a romantic affinity.

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"Well," said Genji, "there are some I might let you see. But there are some I think it better not to."

"You miss the point. The ones I want to see are precisely the ones you want to hide. The ordinary ones—I'm not much of a hand at the game, you know, but even I am up to the ordinary give and take. But the ones from ladies who think you are not doing right by them, who sit alone through an evening and wait for you to come—those are the ones I want to see."

It was not likely that really delicate letters would be left scattered on a shelf, and it may be assumed that the papers treated so carelessly were the less important ones.

"You do have a variety of them," said Tō no Chūjō, reading the correspondence through piece by piece. This will be from her, and this will be from her, he would say. Sometimes he guessed correctly and sometimes he was far afield, to Genji's great amusement. Genji was brief with his replies and let out no secrets.

"It is I who should be asking to see your collection. No doubt it is huge. When I have seen it I shall be happy to throw my files open to you."

"I fear there is nothing that would interest you." Tō no Chūjō was in a contemplative mood. "It is with women as it is with everything else: the flawless ones are very few indeed. This is a sad fact which I have learned over the years. All manner of women seem presentable enough at first. Little notes, replies to this and that, they all suggest sensibility and cultivation. But when you begin sorting out the really superior ones you find that there are not many who have to be on your list. Each has her little tricks and she makes the most of them, getting in her slights at rivals, so broad sometimes that you almost have to blush. Hidden away by loving parents who build brilliant futures for them, they let word get out of this little talent and that little accomplishment and you are all in a stir. They are young and pretty and amiable and carefree, and in their boredom they begin to pick up a little from their elders, and in the natural course of things they begin to concentrate on one particular hobby and make something of it. A woman tells you all about it and hides the weak points and brings out the strong ones as if they were everything, and you can't very well call her a liar. So you begin keeping company, and it is always the same. The fact is not up to the advance notices."

Tō no Chūjō sighed, a sigh clearly based on experience. Some of what he had said, though not all, accorded with Genji's own experience. "And have you come upon any," said Genji, smiling, "who would seem to have nothing at all to recommend them?"

"Who would be fool enough to notice such a woman? And in any case, I should imagine that women with no merits are as rare as women with no faults. If a woman is of good family and well taken care of, then the things she is less than proud of are hidden and she gets by well enough. When you come to the middle ranks, each woman has her own little inclinations and there are

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thousands of ways to separate one from another. And when you come to the lowest—well, who really pays much attention?"

He appeared to know everything. Genji was by now deeply interested.

"You speak of three ranks," he said, "but is it so easy to make the division? There are well-born ladies who fall in the world and there are people of no background who rise to the higher ranks and build themselves fine houses as if intended for them all along. How would you fit such people into your system?"

At this point two young courtiers, a guards officer and a functionary in the ministry of rites, appeared on the scene, to attend the emperor in his retreat. Both were devotees of the way of love and both were good talkers. Tō no Chūjō, as if he had been waiting for them, invited their views on the question that had just been asked. The discussion progressed, and included a number of rather unconvincing points.

"Those who have just arrived at high position," said one of the newcomers, "do not attract the same sort of notice as those who were born to it. And those who were born to the highest rank but somehow do not have the right backing—in spirit they may be as proud and noble as ever, but they cannot hide their deficiencies. And so I think that they should both be put in your middle rank.

"There are those whose families are not quite of the highest rank but who go off and work hard in the provinces. They have their place in the world, though there are all sorts of little differences among them. Some of them would belong on anyone's list. So it is these days. Myself, I would take a woman from a middling family over one who has rank and nothing else. Let us say someone whose father is almost but not quite a councillor. Someone who has a decent enough reputation and comes from a decent enough family and can live in some luxury. Such people can be very pleasant. There is nothing wrong with the household arrangements, and indeed a daughter can sometimes be set out in a way that dazzles you. I can think of several such women it would be hard to find fault with. When they go into court service, they are the ones the unexpected favors have a way of falling on. I have seen cases enough of it, I can tell you."

Genji smiled. "And so a person should limit himself to girls with money?"

"That does not sound like you," said Tō no Chūjō.

"When a woman has the highest rank and a spotless reputation," continued the other, "but something has gone wrong with her upbringing, something is wrong in the way she puts herself forward, you wonder how it can possibly have been allowed to happen. But when all the conditions are right and the girl herself is pretty enough, she is taken for granted. There is no cause for the least surprise. Such ladies are beyond the likes of me, and so I leave them where they are, the highest of the high. There are surprisingly pretty ladies wasting away behind tangles of weeds, and hardly anyone even knows of their existence. The first surprise is hard to forget. There she is, a girl with a fat, sloppy old father and boorish brothers and a house that seems common at

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Ordinary court robe (*kariginu*) for male nobles.

best. Off in the women's rooms is a proud lady who has acquired bits and snatches of this and that. You get wind of them, however small the accomplishments may be, and they take hold of your imagination. She is not the equal of the one who has everything, of course, but she has her charm. She is not easy to pass by."

He looked at his companion, the young man from the ministry of rites. The latter was silent, wondering if the reference might be to his sisters, just then coming into their own as subjects for conversation. Genji, it would seem, was thinking that on the highest levels there were sadly few ladies to bestow much thought upon. He was wearing several soft white singlets with an informal court robe thrown loosely over them. As he sat in the lamplight leaning against an armrest, his companions almost wished that he were a woman. Even the "highest of the high" might seem an inadequate match for him.

Although Genji remains aloof from the discussion, the other young men continue trading notes about desirable and undesirable qualities in women they have known. Tō no Chūjō describes an affair he had with a reticent, undemanding woman (Yūgao) by whom he had a child but who was eventually driven off by his principal wife. Throughout, Genji's thoughts remain on Fujitsubo, who seems to him without flaw.

Lavender

Genji was suffering from repeated attacks of malaria. All manner of religious services were commissioned, but they did no good.

In a certain temple in the northern hills, someone reported, there lived a sage who was a most accomplished worker of cures. "During the epidemic last summer all sorts of people went to him. He was able to cure them immediately when all other treatment had failed. You must not let it have its way. You must summon him at once."

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Genji sent off a messenger, but the sage replied that he was old and bent and unable to leave his cave.

There was no help for it, thought Genji: he must quietly visit the man. He set out before dawn, taking four or five trusted attendants with him.

The temple was fairly deep in the northern hills. Though the cherry blossoms had already fallen in the city, it being late in the Third Month, the mountain cherries were at their best. The deepening mist as the party entered the hills delighted him. He did not often go on such expeditions, for he was of such rank that freedom of movement was not permitted him.

The temple itself was a sad place. The old man's cave was surrounded by rocks, high in the hills behind. Making his way up to it, Genji did not at first reveal his identity. He was in rough disguise, but the holy man immediately saw that he was someone of importance.

"This is a very great honor. You will be the gentleman who sent for me? My mind has left the world, and I have so neglected the ritual that it has quite gone out of my head. I fear that your journey has been in vain." Yet he got busily to work, and he smiled his pleasure at the visit.

He prepared medicines and had Genji drink them, and as he went through his spells and incantations the sun rose higher. Genji walked a few steps from the cave and surveyed the scene. The temple was on a height with other temples spread out below it. Down a winding path he saw a wattled fence of better workmanship than similar fences nearby. The halls and galleries within were nicely disposed and there were fine trees in the garden.

"Whose house might that be?"

"A certain bishop, I am told, has been living there in seclusion for the last two years or so."

"Someone who calls for ceremony—and ceremony is hardly possible in these clothes. He must not know that I am here."

Several pretty little girls had come out to draw water and cut flowers for the altar.

"And I have been told that a lady is in residence too. The bishop can hardly be keeping a mistress. I wonder who she might be."

Several of his men went down to investigate, and reported upon what they had seen. "Some very pretty young ladies and some older women too, and some little girls."

The sage conducts services for Genji and insists that they continue through the night. Genji and his men decide that they will return to the capital at daybreak.

The evening was long. He took advantage of a dense haze to have a look at the house behind the wattled fence. Sending back everyone except Koremitsu, he took up a position at the fence. In the west room sat a nun who had a holy image before her. The blinds were slightly raised and she seemed to be offering flowers. She was leaning against a pillar and had a text spread out on an armrest.

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The effort to read seemed to take all her strength. Perhaps in her forties, she had fair, delicate skin and a pleasantly full face, though the effects of illness were apparent. The features suggested breeding and cultivation. Cut cleanly at the shoulders, her hair seemed to him far more pleasing than if it had been permitted to trail the usual length. Beside her were two attractive women, and little girls scampered in and out. Much the prettiest was a girl of perhaps ten in a soft white singlet and a russet robe. She would one day be a real beauty. Rich hair spread over her shoulders like a fan. Her face was flushed from weeping.

"What is it?" The nun looked up. "Another fight?" He thought he saw a resemblance. Perhaps they were mother and daughter.

"Inuki let my baby sparrows loose." The child was very angry. "I had them in a basket."

"That stupid child," said a rather handsome woman with rich hair who seemed to be called Shōnagon and was apparently the girl's nurse. "She always manages to do the wrong thing, and we are forever scolding her. Where will they have flown off to? They were getting to be such sweet little things too! How awful if the crows find them." She went out.

"What a silly child you are, really too silly," said the nun. "I can't be sure I will last out the day, and here you are worrying about sparrows. I've told you so many times that it's a sin to put birds in a cage. Come here."

The child knelt down beside her. She was charming, with rich, unplucked eyebrows and hair pushed childishly back from the forehead. How he would like to see her in a few years! And a sudden realization brought him close to tears: the resemblance to Fujitsubo, for whom he so yearned, was astonishing.

The nun stroked the girl's hair. "You will not comb it and still it's so pretty. I worry about you, you do seem so very young. Others are much more grown up at your age. Your poor dead mother: she was only ten when her father died, and she understood everything. What will become of you when I am gone?"

She was weeping, and a vague sadness had come over Genji too. The girl gazed attentively at her and then looked down. The hair that fell over her forehead was thick and lustrous.

> "Are these tender grasses to grow without the dew
> which holds itself back from the heavens that would receive it?"

There were tears in the nun's voice, and the other woman seemed also to be speaking through tears:

> "It cannot be that the dew will vanish away
> ere summer comes to these early grasses of spring."

The bishop came in. "What is this? Your blinds up? And today of all days you are out at the veranda? I have just been told that General Genji is up at

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the hermitage being treated for malaria. He came in disguise and I was not told in time to pay a call."

"And what a sight we are. You don't suppose he saw us?" She lowered the blinds.

"The shining one of whom the whole world talks. Wouldn't you like to see him? Enough to make a saint throw off the last traces of the vulgar world, they say, and feel as if new years had been added to his life. I will get off a note."

He hurried away, and Genji too withdrew. What a discovery! It was for such unforeseen rewards that his amorous followers were so constantly on the prowl. Such a rare outing for him, and it had brought such a find! She was a perfectly beautiful child. Who might she be? He was beginning to make plans: the child must stand in the place of the one whom she so resembled.

After Genji has retired to his quarters, the bishop arrives and invites him to pay a visit.

The bishop talked of this ephemeral world and of the world to come. His own burden of sin was heavy, thought Genji, that he had been lured into an illicit and profitless affair. He would regret it all his life and suffer even more terribly in the life to come. What joy to withdraw to such a place as this! But with the thought came thoughts of the young face he had seen earlier in the evening.

"Do you have someone with you here? I had a dream that suddenly begins to make sense."

"How quick you are with your dreams, sir! I fear my answer will disappoint you. It has been a very long time since the Lord Inspector died. I don't suppose you will even have heard of him. He was my brother-in-law. His widow turned her back on the world and recently she has been ill, and since I do not go down to the city she has come to stay with me here. It was her thought that I might be able to help her."

"I have heard that your sister had a daughter. I ask from no more than idle curiosity, you must believe me."

"There was an only daughter. She too has been dead these ten years and more. He took very great pains with her education and hoped to send her to court; but he died before that ambition could be realized, and the nun, my sister, was left to look after her. I do not know through whose offices it was that Prince Hyōbu began visiting the daughter in secret. His wife is from a very proud family, you know, sir, and there were unpleasant incidents, which finally drove the poor thing into a fatal decline. I saw before my own eyes how worry can destroy a person."

So the child he had seen would be the daughter of Prince Hyōbu and the unfortunate lady; and it was Fujitsubo, the prince's sister, whom she so resembled. He wanted more than ever to meet her. She was an elegant child, and

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she did not seem at all spoiled. What a delight if he could take her into his house and make her his ideal!

"A very sad story." He wished to be completely sure. "Did she leave no one behind?"

"She had a child just before she died, a girl, a great source of worry for my poor sister in her declining years."

There could be no further doubt. "What I am about to say will, I fear, startle you—but might I have charge of the child? I have rather good reasons, for all the suddenness of my proposal. If you are telling yourself that she is too young—well, sir, you are doing me an injustice. Other men may have improper motives, but I do not."

"Your words quite fill me with delight. But she is indeed young, so very young that we could not possibly think even in jest of asking you to take responsibility for her. Only the man who is presently to be her husband can take that responsibility. In a matter of such import I am not competent to give an answer. I must discuss the matter with my sister." He was suddenly remote and chilly.

Genji had spoken with youthful impulsiveness and could not think what to do next.

Genji spends the night at the bishop's and engages in an exchange of poetry with the nun, making his interest in the girl known, much to the consternation of the nun and the attendants. The bishop and the nun agree that Genji's proposal is rather precipitate and suggest that he wait until the girl grows up. Genji returns to the city and grudgingly accedes to his father-in-law's request that he spend some time at Sanjō to continue his recuperation.

At the minister's Sanjō mansion everything was in readiness. It had been polished and refitted until it was a jeweled pavilion, perfect to the last detail. As always, Genji's wife Aoi secluded herself in her private apartments, and it was only at her father's urging that she came forth; and so Genji had her before him, immobile, like a princess in an illustration for a romance. It would have been a great pleasure, he was sure, to have her comment even tartly upon his account of the mountain journey. She seemed the stiffest, remotest person in the world. How odd that the aloofness seemed only to grow as time went by.

"It would be nice, I sometimes think, if you could be a little more wifely. I have been very ill, and I am hurt, but not really surprised, that you have not inquired after my health."

"Like the pain, perhaps, of awaiting a visitor who does not come?"

She cast a sidelong glance at him as she spoke, and her cold beauty was very intimidating indeed.

"You so rarely speak to me, and when you do you say such unpleasant things. 'A visitor who does not come'—that is hardly an appropriate way to describe a

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husband, and indeed it is hardly civil. I try this approach and I try that, hoping to break through, but you seem intent on defending all the approaches. Well, one of these years, perhaps, if I live long enough."

He withdrew to the bedchamber. She did not follow. Though there were things he would have liked to say, he lay down with a sigh. He closed his eyes, but there was too much on his mind to permit sleep.

He thought of the little girl and how he would like to see her grown into a woman. Her grandmother was of course right when she said that the girl was still too young for him. He must not seem insistent. And yet—was there not some way to bring her quietly to Nijō and have her beside him, a comfort and a companion? Prince Hyōbu was a dashing and stylish man, but no one could have called him remarkably handsome. Why did the girl so take after her aunt? Perhaps because aunt and father were children of the same empress. These thoughts seemed to bring the girl closer, and he longed to have her for his own.

. . . Fujitsubo was ill and had gone home to her family. Genji managed a sympathetic thought or two for his lonely father, but his thoughts were chiefly on the possibility of seeing Fujitsubo. He quite halted his visits to other ladies. All through the day, at home and at court, he sat gazing off into space, and in the evening he would press Omyōbu to be his intermediary. How she did it I do not know; but she contrived a meeting. It is sad to have to say that his earlier attentions, so unwelcome, no longer seemed real, and the mere thought that they had been successful was for Fujitsubo a torment. Determined that there would not be another meeting, she was shocked to find him in her presence again. She did not seek to hide her distress, and her efforts to turn him away delighted him even as they put him to shame. There was no one else quite like her. In that fact was his undoing: he would be less a prey to longing if he could find in her even a trace of the ordinary. And the tumult of thoughts and feelings that now assailed him—he would have liked to consign it to the Mountain of Obscurity.[321] It might have been better, he sighed, so short was the night, if he had not come at all.

> "So few and scattered the nights, so few the dreams.
> Would that the dream tonight might take me with it."

He was in tears, and she did, after all, have to feel sorry for him. "Were I to disappear in the last of dreams, would yet my name live on in infamy?"

She had every right to be unhappy, and he was sad for her. Omyōbu gathered his clothes and brought them out to him.

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321. Kurabunoyama, thought to have been in either Yamashiro or Ōmi.

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Back at Nijō he spent a tearful day in bed. He had word from Omyōbu that her lady had not read his letter. So it always was, and yet he was hurt. He remained in distraught seclusion for several days. The thought that his father might be wondering about his absence filled him with terror.

Lamenting the burden of sin that seemed to be hers, Fujitsubo was more and more unwell, and could not bestir herself, despite repeated messages summoning her back to court. She was not at all her usual self—and what was to become of her? She took to her bed as the weather turned warmer. Three months had now passed and her condition was clear; and the burden of sin now seemed to have made it necessary that she submit to curious and reproving stares. Her women thought her behavior very curious indeed. Why had she let so much time pass without informing the emperor? There was of course a crucial matter of which she spoke to no one. Ben, the daughter of her old nurse, and Omyōbu, both of whom were very close to her and attended her in the bath, had ample opportunity to observe her condition. Omyōbu was aghast. Her lady had been trapped by the harshest of fates. The emperor would seem to have been informed that a malign spirit had possession of her, and to have believed the story, as did the court in general. He sent a constant stream of messengers, which terrified her and allowed no pause in her sufferings.

Genji had a strange, rather awful dream. He consulted a soothsayer, who said that it portended events so extraordinary as to be almost unthinkable.

"It contains bad omens as well. You must be careful."

"It was not my own dream but a friend's. We will see whether it comes true, and in the meantime you must keep it to yourself."

What could it mean? He heard of Fujitsubo's condition, thought of their night together, and wondered whether the two might be related. He exhausted his stock of pleas for another meeting. Horrified that matters were so out of hand, Omyōbu could do nothing for him. He had on rare occasions had a brief note, no more than a line or two; but now even these messages ceased coming.

Fujitsubo returned to court in the Seventh Month. The emperor's affection for her had only grown in her absence. Her condition was now apparent to everyone. A slight emaciation made her beauty seem if anything nearer perfection, and the emperor kept her always at his side. The skies as autumn approached called more insistently for music. Keeping Genji too beside him, the emperor had him try his hand at this and that instrument. Genji struggled to control himself, but now and then a sign of his scarcely bearable feelings did show through, to remind the lady of what she wanted more than anything to forget. . . .

In the autumn evening, his thoughts on his unattainable love, he longed more than ever, unnatural though the wish may have seemed, for the company of the little girl who sprang from the same roots. The thought of the evening when the old nun had described herself as dew holding back from the heavens

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made him even more impatient—and at the same time he feared that if he were to bring the girl to Nijō he would be disappointed in her.

> "I long to have it, to bring it in from the moor,
> the lavender[322] that shares its roots with another."

In the Tenth Month the emperor was to visit the Suzaku Palace. From all the great families and the middle and upper courtly ranks the most accomplished musicians and dancers were selected to go with him, and grandees and princes of the blood were busy at the practice that best suited their talents. Caught up in the excitement, Genji was somewhat remiss in inquiring after the nun.

When, finally, he sent off a messenger to the northern hills, a sad reply came from the bishop: "We lost her toward the end of last month. It is the way of the world, I know, and yet I am sad."

If the news shocked even him into a new awareness of evanescence, thought Genji, how must it be for the little girl who had so occupied the nun's thoughts? Young though she was, she must feel utterly lost. He remembered, though dimly, how it had been when his mother died, and he sent off an earnest letter of sympathy. Shōnagon's answer seemed rather warmer. He went calling on an evening when he had nothing else to occupy him, some days after he learned that the girl had come out of mourning and returned to the city. The house was badly kept and almost deserted. The poor child must be terrified, he thought. He was shown to the same room as before. Sobbing, Shōnagon told him of the old lady's last days. Genji too was in tears.

"My young lady's father would seem to have indicated a willingness to take her in, but she is at such an uncomfortable age, not quite a child and still without the discernment of an adult; and the thought of having her in the custody of the lady who was so cruel to her mother is too awful. Her sisters will persecute her dreadfully, I know. The fear of it never left my lady's mind, and we have had too much evidence that the fear was not groundless. We have been grateful for your expressions of interest, though we have hesitated to take them seriously. I must emphasize that my young lady is not at all what you must think her to be. I fear that we have done badly by her, and that our methods have left her childish even for her years."

"Must you continue to be so reticent and apologetic? I have made my own feelings clear, over and over again. It is precisely the childlike quality that

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322. *Murasaki*, a gromwell from the roots of which a lavender dye is extracted. Lavender, in general the color of affinity or intimacy, suggests more specifically the *fuji* of Fujitsubo, or Wisteria Court. It is because of this poem that the girl is soon to be called Murasaki. The name Murasaki Shikibu may also derive from it.

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delights me most and makes me think I must have her for my own. You may think me complacent and self-satisfied for saying so, but I feel sure that we were joined in a former life. Let me speak to her, please.

> "Rushes hide the sea grass at Wakanoura.
> Must the waves that seek it out turn back to sea?

"That would be too much to ask of them."

> "The grass at Wakanoura were rash indeed
> to follow waves that go it knows not whither.

"It would be far, far too much to ask."

The easy skill with which she turned her poem made it possible for him to forgive its less than encouraging significance. "After so many years," he whispered, "the gate still holds me back."[323]

The girl lay weeping for her grandmother. Her playmates came to tell her that a gentleman in court dress was with Shōnagon. Perhaps it would be her father?

She came running in. "Where is the gentleman, Shōnagon? Is Father here?"

What a sweet voice she had!

"I'm not your father, but I'm someone just as important. Come here."

She saw that it was the other gentleman, and child though she was, she flushed at having spoken out of turn. "Let's go." She tugged at Shōnagon's sleeve. "Let's go. I'm sleepy."

"Do you have to keep hiding yourself from me? Come here. You can sleep on my knee."

"She is really very young, sir." But Shōnagon urged the child forward, and she knelt obediently just inside the blinds.

He ran his hand over a soft, rumpled robe, and, a delight to the touch, hair full and rich to its farthest ends. He took her hand. She pulled away—for he was, after all, a stranger.

"I said I'm sleepy." She went back to Shōnagon.

He slipped in after her. "I am the one you must look to now. You must not be shy with me."

"Please, sir. You forget yourself. You forget yourself completely. She is simply not old enough to understand what you have in mind."

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323. Fujiwara no Koretada, *Gosenshū*, no. 732: "Alone, in secret, I hurry to Meeting Hill. After so many years, the gate still holds me back."

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"It is you who do not understand. I see how young she is, and I have nothing of the sort in mind. I must again ask you to be witness to the depth and purity of my feelings."

It was a stormy night. Sleet was pounding against the roof.

"How can she bear to live in such a lonely place? It must be awful for her." Tears came to his eyes. He could not leave her. "I will be your watchman. You need one on a night like this. Come close to me, all of you."

Quite as if he belonged there, he slipped into the girl's bedroom. The women were astounded, Shōnagon more than the rest. He must be mad! But she was in no position to protest. Genji pulled a singlet over the girl, who was trembling like a leaf. Yes, he had to admit that his behavior must seem odd; but, trying very hard not to frighten her, he talked of things he thought would interest her.

"You must come to my house. I have all sorts of pictures, and there are dolls for you to play with."

She was less frightened than at first, but she still could not sleep. The storm blew all through the night, and Shōnagon quite refused to budge from their side. They would surely have perished of fright, whispered the women, if they had not had him with them. What a pity their lady was not a little older!

It was still dark when the wind began to subside and he made his departure, and all the appearances were as of an amorous expedition. "What I have seen makes me very sad and convinces me that she must not be out of my sight. She must come and live with me and share my lonely days. This place is quite impossible. You must be in constant terror."

"Her father has said that he will come for her. I believe it is to be after the memorial services."

"Yes, we must think of him. But they have lived apart, and he must be as much of a stranger as I am. I really do believe that in this very short time my feelings for her are stronger than his." He patted the girl on the head and looked back smiling as he left. . . .

Genji sent Koremitsu to make excuses. He wanted very much to call, but he had received an ill-timed summons from the palace.

"Has he quite forgotten his manners?" said Shōnagon. "I know very well that this is not as serious an affair for him as for us, but a man is expected to call regularly at the beginning of any affair. Her father, if he hears of it, will think that we have managed very badly indeed. You are young, my lady, but you must not speak of it to anyone." But the girl was not listening as attentively as Shōnagon would have wished.

Koremitsu was permitted a hint or two of their worries. "Perhaps when the time comes we will be able to tell ourselves that what must be must be, but at the moment the incompatibility overshadows everything. And your lord says and does such extraordinary things. Her father came today and did not improve matters by telling us that nothing must be permitted to happen. What could be worse than your lord's way of doing things?" She was keeping her objections to

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a minimum, however, for she did not want Koremitsu to think that anything of real importance had occurred.

Puzzled, Koremitsu returned to Nijō and reported upon what he had seen and heard. Genji was touched, though not moved to pay a visit. He was worried about rumors and the imputation of recklessness and frivolity that was certain to go with them. He must bring the girl to Nijō.

He sent several notes, and in the evening dispatched Koremitsu, his most faithful and reliable messenger. Certain obstacles prevented Genji's calling in person, said Koremitsu, but they must not be taken to suggest a want of seriousness.

"Her royal father has said that he will come for her tomorrow. We are feeling rather pressed. It is sad, after all, to leave a familiar place, however shabby and weedy it may be. You must forgive us. We are not entirely ourselves."

She gave him short shrift. He could see that they were busy at needlework and other preparations.

Genji was at his father-in-law's house in Sanjō. His wife was as always slow to receive him. In his boredom and annoyance he took out a Japanese koto and pleasantly hummed "The Field in Hitachi." Then came Koremitsu's unsettling report. He must act. If he were to take her from her father's house, he would be called a lecher and a child thief. He must swear the women to secrecy and bring her to Nijō immediately.

"I will go early in the morning. Have my carriage left as it is, and order a guard, no more than a man or two."

Koremitsu went to see that these instructions were carried out. Genji knew that he was taking risks. People would say that his appetites were altogether too varied. If the girl were a little older he would be credited with having made a conquest, and that would be that. Though Prince Hyōbu would be very upset indeed, Genji knew that he must not let the child go. It was still dark when he set out. His wife had no more than usual to say to him.

"I have just remembered some business at Nijō that absolutely has to be taken care of. I should not be long."

Her women did not even know that he had gone. He went to his own rooms and changed to informal court dress. Koremitsu alone was on horseback.

When they reached their destination one of his men pounded on the gate. Ignorant of what was afoot, the porter allowed Genji's carriage to be pulled inside. Koremitsu went to a corner door and coughed. Shōnagon came out.

"My lord is here."

"And my lady is asleep. You pick strange hours for your visits." Shōnagon suspected that he was on his way home from an amorous adventure.

Genji had joined Koremitsu.

"There is something I must say to her before she goes to her father's."

Shōnagon smiled. "And no doubt she will have many interesting things to say in reply."

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He pushed his way inside.

"Please, sir. We were not expecting anyone. The old women are a dreadful sight."

"I will go wake her. The morning mist is too beautiful for sleep."

He went into her bedroom, where the women were too surprised to cry out. He took her in his arms and smoothed her hair. Her father had come for her, she thought, only half awake.

"Let's go. I have come from your father's." She was terrified when she saw that it was not after all her father. "You are not being nice. I have told you that you must think of me as your father." And he carried her out.

A chorus of protests now came from Shōnagon and the others.

"I have explained things quite well enough. I have told you how difficult it is for me to visit her and how I want to have her in a more comfortable and accessible spot; and your way of making things easier is to send her off to her father. One of you may come along, if you wish."

"Please, sir." Shōnagon was wringing her hands. "You could not have chosen a worse time. What are we to say when her father comes? If it is her fate to be your lady, then perhaps something can be done when the time comes. This is too sudden, and you put us in an extremely difficult position."

"You can come later if you wish."

His carriage had been brought up. The women were fluttering about helplessly and the child was sobbing. Seeing at last that there was nothing else to be done, Shōnagon took up several of the robes they had been at work on the night before, changed to presentable clothes of her own, and got into the carriage.

It was still dark when they reached Nijō, only a short distance away. Genji ordered the carriage brought up to the west wing and took the girl inside.

"It is like a nightmare," said Shōnagon. "What am I to do?"

"Whatever you like. I can have someone see you home if you wish."

Weeping helplessly, poor Shōnagon got out of the carriage. What would her lady's father think when he came for her? And what did they now have to look forward to? The saddest thing was to be left behind by one's protectors. But tears did not augur well for the new life. With an effort she pulled herself together.

Since no one was living in this west wing, there was no curtained bedchamber. Genji had Koremitsu put up screens and curtains, sent someone else to the east wing for bedding, and lay down. Though trembling violently, the girl managed to keep from sobbing aloud.

"I always sleep with Shōnagon," she said softly in childish accents.

"Imagine a big girl like you still sleeping with her nurse."

Weeping quietly, the girl lay down.

Shōnagon sat up beside them, looking out over the garden as dawn came on. The buildings and grounds were magnificent, and the sand in the garden

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was like jewels. Not used to such affluence, she was glad there were no other women in this west wing. It was here that Genji received occasional callers. A few guards beyond the blinds were the only attendants.

They were speculating on the identity of the lady he had brought with him. "Someone worth looking at, you can bet."

Water pitchers and breakfast were brought in. The sun was high when Genji arose. "You will need someone to take care of you. Suppose you send this evening for the ones you like best." He asked that children be sent from the east wing to play with her. "Pretty little girls, please." Four little girls came in, very pretty indeed.

The new girl, his Murasaki, still lay huddled under the singlet he had thrown over her.

"You are not to sulk, now, and make me unhappy. Would I have done all this for you if I were not a nice man? Young ladies should do as they are told." And so the lessons began.

She seemed even prettier here beside him than from afar. His manner warm and fatherly, he sought to amuse her with pictures and toys he had sent for from the east wing. Finally she came over to him. Her dark mourning robes were soft and unstarched, and when she smiled, innocently and unprotestingly, he had to smile back. She went out to look at the trees and pond after he had departed for the east wing. The flowers in the foreground, delicately touched by frost, were like a picture. Streams of courtiers, of the medium ranks and new to her experience, passed back and forth. Yes, it was an interesting place. She looked at the pictures on screens and elsewhere and (so it is with a child) soon forgot her troubles. . . .

Presently Murasaki had all her women with her. She was a bright, lively child, and the boys and girls who were to be her playmates felt quite at home with her. Sometimes on lonely nights when Genji was away she would weep for her grandmother. She thought little of her father. They had lived apart and she scarcely knew him. She was by now extremely fond of her new father. She would be the first to run out and greet him when he came home, and she would climb on his lap, and they would talk happily together, without the least constraint or embarrassment. He was delighted with her. A clever and watchful woman can create all manner of difficulties. A man must be always on his guard, and jealousy can have the most unwelcome consequences. Murasaki was the perfect companion, a toy for him to play with. He could not have been so free and uninhibited with a daughter of his own. There are restraints upon paternal intimacy. Yes, he had come upon a remarkable little treasure.

An Autumn Excursion

Fujitsubo had gone home to her family. Looking restlessly, as always, for a chance to see her, Genji was much criticized by his father-in-law's people at

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Sanjō. And rumors of the young Murasaki were out. Certain of the women at Sanjō let it be known that a new lady had been taken in at Nijō. Genji's wife was intensely displeased. It was most natural that she should be, for she did not of course know that the "lady" was a mere child. If she had complained to him openly, as most women would have done, he might have told her everything, and no doubt eased her jealousy. It was her arbitrary judgments that sent him wandering. She had no specific faults, no vices or blemishes, which he could point to. She had been the first lady in his life, and in an abstract way he admired and treasured her. Her feelings would change, he felt sure, once she was more familiar with his own. She was a perceptive woman, and the change was certain to come. She still occupied first place among his ladies.

Murasaki was by now thoroughly comfortable with him. She was maturing in appearance and manner, and yet there was artlessness in her way of clinging to him. Thinking it too early to let the people in the main hall know who she was, he kept her in one of the outer wings, which he had had fitted to perfection. He was constantly with her, tutoring her in the polite accomplishments and especially calligraphy. It was as if he had brought home a daughter who had spent her early years in another house. He had studied the qualifications of her stewards and assured himself that she would have everything she needed. Everyone in the house, save only Koremitsu, was consumed with curiosity. Her father still did not know of her whereabouts. Sometimes she would weep for her grandmother. Her mind was full of other things when Genji was with her, and often he stayed the night; but he had numerous other places to look in upon, and he was quite charmed by the wistfulness with which she would see him off in the evening. Sometimes he would spend two and three days at the palace and go from there to Sanjō. Finding a pensive Murasaki upon his return, he would feel as if he had taken in a little orphan. He no longer looked forward to his nocturnal wanderings with the same eagerness. Her granduncle the bishop kept himself informed of her affairs, and was pleased and puzzled. Genji sent most lavish offerings for memorial services.

Longing for news of Fujitsubo, still with her family, he paid a visit. Omyōbu, Chūnagon, Nakatsukasa, and others of her women received him, but the lady whom he really wanted to see kept him at a distance. He forced himself to make conversation. Prince Hyōbu, her brother and Murasaki's father, came in, having heard that Genji was on the premises. He was a man of great and gentle elegance, someone, thought Genji, who would interest him enormously were they of opposite sexes. Genji felt very near this prince so near the two ladies, and to the prince their conversation seemed friendly and somehow significant as earlier conversations had not. How very handsome Genji was! Not dreaming that it was a prospective son-in-law he was addressing, he too was thinking how susceptible (for he was a susceptible man) he would be to Genji's charms if they were not of the same sex.

When, at dusk, the prince withdrew behind the blinds, Genji felt pangs of jealousy. In the old years he had followed his father behind those same blinds,

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and there addressed the lady. Now she was far away—though of course no one had wronged him, and he had no right to complain.

"I have not been good about visiting you," he said stiffly as he got up to leave. "Having no business with you, I have not wished to seem forward. It would give me great pleasure if you would let me know of any services I might perform for you."

Omyōbu could do nothing for him. Fujitsubo seemed to find his presence even more of a trial than before, and showed no sign of relenting. Sadly and uselessly the days went by. What a frail, fleeting union theirs had been!

Shōnagon, Murasaki's nurse, continued to marvel at the strange course their lives had taken. Perhaps some benign power had arranged it, the old nun having mentioned Murasaki in all her prayers. Not that everything was perfect. Genji's wife at Sanjō was a lady of the highest station, and other affairs, indeed too many of them, occupied him as well. Might not the girl face difficult times as she grew into womanhood? Yet he did seem fond of her as of none of the others, and her future seemed secure. The period of mourning for a maternal grandmother being set at three months, it was on New Year's Eve that Murasaki took off her mourning weeds. The old lady had been for her both mother and grandmother, however, and so she chose to limit herself to pale, unfigured pinks and lavenders and yellows. Pale colors seemed to suit her even better than rich ones.

"And do you feel all grown up, now that a new year has come?" Smiling, radiating youthful charm, Genji looked in upon her. He was on his way to the morning festivities at court.

She had already taken out her dolls and was busy seeing to their needs. All manner of furnishings and accessories were laid out on a yard-high shelf. Dollhouses threatened to overflow the room.

"Inuki knocked everything over chasing out devils last night and broke this." It was a serious matter. "I'm gluing it."

"Yes, she really is very clumsy, that Inuki. We'll ask someone to repair it for you. But today you must not cry. Crying is the worst way to begin a new year."

And he went out, his retinue so grand that it overflowed the wide grounds. The women watched from the veranda, the girl with them. She set out a Genji among her dolls and saw him off to court.

"This year you must try to be just a little more grown up," said Shōnagon. "Ten years old, no, even more, and still you play with dolls. It will not do. You have a nice husband, and you must try to calm down and be a little more wifely. Why, you fly into a tantrum even when we try to brush your hair." A proper shaming was among Shōnagon's methods.

So she had herself a nice husband, thought Murasaki. The husbands of these women were none of them handsome men, and hers was so very young and handsome. The thought came to her now for the first time, evidence that, for all this play with dolls, she was growing up. It sometimes puzzled her women that she should still be such a child. It did not occur to them that she was in fact not yet a wife.

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From the palace Genji went to Sanjō. His wife, as always, showed no suggestion of warmth or affection; and as always he was uncomfortable.

"How pleasant if this year you could manage to be a little friendlier."

But since she had heard of his new lady she had become more distant than ever. She was convinced that the other was now first among his ladies, and no doubt she was as uncomfortable as he. But when he jokingly sought to make it seem that nothing was amiss, she had to answer, if reluctantly. Everything she said was uniquely, indefinably elegant. She was four years his senior and made him feel like a stripling. Where, he asked, was he to find a flaw in this perfection? Yet he seemed determined to anger her with his other affairs. She was a proud lady, the single and treasured daughter, by a princess, of a minister who overshadowed the other grandees, and she was not prepared to tolerate the smallest discourtesy. And here he was behaving as if these proud ways were his to make over. They were completely at cross purposes, he and she . . .

Genji did not pay many New Year calls. He called upon his father, the crown prince, the old emperor,[324] and, finally, Fujitsubo, still with her family. Her women thought him handsomer than ever. Yes, each year, as he matured, his good looks produced a stronger shudder of delight and foreboding. Fujitsubo was assailed by innumerable conflicting thoughts.

The Twelfth Month, when she was to have been delivered of her child, had passed uneventfully. Surely it would be this month, said her women, and at court everything was in readiness; but the First Month too passed without event. She was greatly troubled by rumors that she had fallen under a malign influence. Her worries had made her physically ill and she began to wonder if the end was in sight. More and more certain as time passed that the child was his, Genji quietly commissioned services in various temples. More keenly aware than most of the evanescence of things, he now found added to his worries a fear that he would not see her again. Finally toward the end of the Second Month she bore a prince, and the jubilation was unbounded at court and at her family palace. She had not joined the emperor in praying that she be granted a long life, and yet she did not want to please Kokiden, an echo of whose curses had reached her. The will to live returned, and little by little she recovered.

The emperor wanted to see his little son the earliest day possible. Genji, filled with his own secret paternal solicitude, visited Fujitsubo at a time when he judged she would not have other visitors.

"Father is extremely anxious to see the child. Perhaps I might have a look at him first and present a report."

She refused his request, as of course she had every right to do. "He is still very shriveled and ugly."

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324. Perhaps the father of the reigning emperor; he is mentioned nowhere else. The reign of the current emperor seems to have been preceded by that of Fujitsubo's father, now dead.

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There was no doubt that the child bore a marked, indeed a rather wonderful, resemblance to Genji. Fujitsubo was tormented by feelings of guilt and apprehension. Surely everyone who saw the child would guess the awful truth and damn her for it. People were always happy to seek out the smallest and most trivial of misdeeds. Hers had not been trivial, and dreadful rumors must surely be going the rounds. Had ever a woman been more sorely tried?

Genji occasionally saw Omyōbu and pleaded that she intercede for him; but there was nothing she could do.

"This insistence, my lord, is very trying," she said, at his constant and passionate pleas to see the child. "You will have chances enough later." Yet secretly she was as unhappy as he was.

"In what world, I wonder, will I again be allowed to see her?" The heart of the matter was too delicate to touch upon.

> "What legacy do we bring from former lives
> that loneliness should be our lot in this one?

"I do not understand. I do not understand at all."

His tears brought her to the point of tears herself. Knowing how unhappy her lady was, she could not bring herself to turn him brusquely away.

> "Sad at seeing the child, sad at not seeing.
> The heart of the father, the mother, lost in darkness."[325]

And she added softly: "There seems to be no lessening of the pain for either of you."

She saw him off, quite unable to help him. Her lady had said that because of the danger of gossip she could not receive him again, and she no longer behaved toward Omyōbu with the old affection. She behaved correctly, it was true, and did nothing that might attract attention, but Omyōbu had done things to displease her. Omyōbu was very sorry for them.

In the Fourth Month the little prince was brought to the palace. Advanced for his age both mentally and physically, he was already able to sit up and to right himself when he rolled over. He was strikingly like Genji. Unaware of the truth, the emperor would say to himself that people of remarkable good looks did have a way of looking alike. He doted upon the child. He had similarly doted upon Genji, but, because of strong opposition—and how deeply he regretted the fact—had been unable to make him crown prince. The regret increased as Genji, now a commoner, improved in looks and in accomplishments. And now a lady of the highest birth had borne the emperor another

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325. Fujiwara no Kanesuke, *Gosenshū*, no. 1103: "The heart of a parent is not darkness, and yet he wanders lost in thoughts upon his child."

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radiant son. The infant was for him an unflawed jewel, for Fujitsubo a source of boundless guilt and foreboding.

One day, as he often did, Genji was enjoying music in Fujitsubo's apartments. The emperor came out with the little boy in his arms.

"I have had many sons, but you were the only one I paid a great deal of attention to when you were this small. Perhaps it is the memory of those days that makes me think he looks like you. Is it that all children look alike when they are very young?" He made no attempt to hide his pleasure in the child.

Genji felt himself flushing crimson. He was frightened and awed and pleased and touched, all at the same time, and there were tears in his eyes. Laughing and babbling, the child was so beautiful as to arouse fears that he would not be long in this world. If indeed he resembled the child, thought Genji, then he must be very handsome. He must take better care of himself. (He seemed a little self-satisfied at times.) Fujitsubo was in such acute discomfort that she felt herself breaking into a cold sweat. Eager though he had been to see the child, Genji left in great agitation.

Fujitsubo is named empress in the Seventh Month, and the emperor plans to name her son by Genji (the future Reizei emperor) the crown prince. In the spring of the following year, Genji begins a secret affair with Oborozukiyo, daughter of the powerful minister of the right and sister of the Kokiden lady, whose father plans to marry her to the crown prince (the future Suzaku emperor). Genji's father abdicates the following year, and the Suzaku emperor ascends the throne, rendering Genji's position unstable. The Rokujō lady, whom Genji has been involved with for some time, is a proud and highly sophisticated lady of high rank who appears for the first time in "Evening Faces" (Yūgao), the fourth chapter, in which she (or, rather, her wandering spirit) appears to be responsible for the death of the young and vulnerable Yūgao.

Heartvine

With the new reign Genji's career languished, and since he must be more discreet about his romantic adventures as he rose in rank, he had less to amuse him. Everywhere there were complaints about his aloofness.

As if to punish him, there was one lady who continued to cause him pain with her own aloofness. Fujitsubo saw more of the old emperor, now abdicated, than ever. She was always at his side, almost as if she were a common housewife. Annoyed at this state of affairs, Kokiden did not follow the old emperor when he left the main palace. Fujitsubo was happy and secure. The concerts in the old emperor's palace attracted the attention of the whole court, and altogether life was happier for the two of them than while he had reigned. Only one thing was lacking: he greatly missed the crown prince, Fujitsubo's son, and worried that he had no strong backers. Genji, he said, must be the boy's adviser and guardian. Genji was both pleased and embarrassed.

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And there was the matter of the lady at Rokujō. With the change of reigns, her daughter, who was also the daughter of the late crown prince, had been appointed high priestess of the Ise Shrine. No longer trusting Genji's affections, the Rokujō lady had been thinking that, making the girl's youth her excuse, she too would go to Ise.

The old emperor heard of her plans. "The crown prince was so very fond of her," he said to Genji, in open displeasure. "It is sad that you should have made light of her, as if she were any ordinary woman. I think of the high priestess as one of my own children, and you should be good to her mother, for my sake and for the sake of the dead prince. It does you no good to abandon yourself to these affairs quite as the impulse takes you."

It was perfectly true, thought Genji. He waited in silence.

"You should treat any woman with tact and courtesy, and be sure that you cause her no embarrassment. You should never have a woman angry with you."

What would his father think if he were to learn of Genji's worst indiscretion? The thought made Genji shudder. He bowed and withdrew.

The matter his father had thus reproved him for did no good for either of them, the woman or Genji himself. It was a scandal, and very sad for her. She continued to be very much on his mind, and yet he had no thought of making her his wife. She had grown cool toward him, worried about the difference in their ages. He made it seem that it was because of her wishes that he stayed away. Now that the old emperor knew of the affair the whole court knew of it. In spite of everything, the lady went on grieving that he had not loved her better. . . .

At Sanjō, his wife and her family were even unhappier about his infidelities, but, perhaps because he did not lie to them, they for the most part kept their displeasure to themselves. His wife was with child and in considerable distress mentally and physically. For Genji it was a strange and moving time. Everyone was delighted and at the same time filled with apprehension, and all manner of retreats and abstinences were prescribed for the lady. Genji had little time to himself. While he had no particular wish to avoid the Rokujō lady and the others, he rarely visited them.

At about this time the high priestess of Kamo resigned. She was replaced by the old emperor's third daughter, whose mother was Kokiden. The new priestess was a favorite of both her brother, the new emperor, and her mother, and it seemed a great pity that she should be shut off from court life; but no other princess was qualified for the position. The installation ceremonies, in the austere Shinto tradition, were of great dignity and solemnity. Many novel details were added to the Kamo festival in the Fourth Month, so that it was certain to be the finest of the season. Though the number of high courtiers attending the princess at the lustration at the Kamo River was limited by precedent, great care was taken to choose handsome men of good repute. Similar care was given to their uniforms and to the uniform trappings of their horses. Genji was among

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the attendants, by special command of the new emperor. Courtiers and ladies had readied their carriages far in advance, and Ichijō was a frightening crush, without space for another vehicle. The stands along the way had been appointed most elaborately. The sleeves that showed beneath the curtains fulfilled in their brightness and variety all the festive promise.

Genji's wife seldom went forth on sightseeing expeditions and her pregnancy was another reason for staying at home.

But her young women protested. "Really, my lady, it won't be much fun sneaking off by ourselves. Why, even complete strangers—why, all the country folk have come in to see our lord! They've brought their wives and families from the farthest provinces. It will be too much if you make us stay away."

Her mother agreed. "You seem to be feeling well enough, my dear, and they will be very disappointed if you don't take them."

And so carriages were hastily and unostentatiously decked out, and the sun was already high when they set forth. The waysides were by now too crowded to admit the elegant Sanjō procession. Coming upon several fine carriages not attended by grooms and footmen, the Sanjō men commenced clearing a space. Two palm-frond carriages remained, not new ones, obviously belonging to someone who did not wish to attract attention. The curtains and the sleeves and aprons to be glimpsed beneath them, some in the gay colors little girls wear, were in very good taste.

The men in attendance sought to defend their places against the Sanjō invaders. "We aren't the sort of people you push around."

There had been too much drink in both parties, and the drunken ones were not responsive to the efforts of their more mature and collected seniors to restrain them.

The palm-frond carriages were from the Rokujō house of the high priestess of Ise. The Rokujō lady had come quietly to see the procession, hoping that it might make her briefly forget her unhappiness. The men from Sanjō had recognized her, but preferred to make it seem otherwise.

"They can't tell us who to push and not to push," said the more intemperate ones to their fellows. "They have General Genji to make them feel important."

Among the newcomers were some of Genji's men. They recognized and felt a little sorry for the Rokujō lady, but, not wishing to become involved, they looked the other way. Presently all the Sanjō carriages were in place. The Rokujō lady, behind the lesser ones, could see almost nothing. Quite aside from her natural distress at the insult, she was filled with the bitterest chagrin that, having refrained from display, she had been recognized. The stools for her carriage shafts had been broken and the shafts propped on the hubs of perfectly strange carriages, a most undignified sight. It was no good asking herself why she had come. She thought of going home without seeing the procession, but there was no room for her to pass; and then came word that the procession was approaching, and she must, after all, see the man who had caused her such unhappiness. How weak is the heart of a woman! Perhaps because this was not

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"the bamboo by the river Hinokuma,"[326] he passed without stopping his horse or looking her way; and the unhappiness was greater than if she had stayed at home.

Genji seemed indifferent to all the grandly decorated carriages and all the gay sleeves, such a flood of them that it was as if ladies were stacked in layers behind the carriage curtains. Now and again, however, he would have a smile and a glance for a carriage he recognized. His face was solemn and respectful as he passed his wife's carriage. His men bowed deeply, and the Rokujō lady was in misery. She had been utterly defeated.

She whispered to herself:

> "A distant glimpse of the River of Lustration.
> His coldness is the measure of my sorrow."

She was ashamed of her tears. Yet she thought how sorry she would have been if she had not seen that handsome figure set off to such advantage by the crowds.

The high courtiers were, after their several ranks, impeccably dressed and caparisoned and many of them were very handsome; but Genji's radiance dimmed the strongest lights. Among his special attendants was a guards officer of the Sixth Rank, though attendants of such standing were usually reserved for the most splendid royal processions. His retinue made such a fine procession itself that every tree and blade of grass along the way seemed to bend forward in admiration.

It is not on the whole considered good form for veiled ladies of no mean rank and even nuns who have withdrawn from the world to be jostling and shoving one another in the struggle to see, but today no one thought it out of place. Hollow-mouthed women of the lower classes, their hair tucked under their robes, their hands brought respectfully to their foreheads, were hopping about in hopes of catching a glimpse. Plebeian faces were wreathed in smiles which their owners might not have enjoyed seeing in mirrors, and daughters of petty provincial officers of whose existence Genji would scarcely have been aware had set forth in carriages decked out with the most exhaustive care and taken up posts which seemed to offer a chance of seeing him. There were almost as many things by the wayside as in the procession to attract one's attention. . . .

No carriages set out from the Sanjō mansion on the day of the festival proper.

Genji presently heard the story of the competing carriages. He was sorry for the Rokujō lady and angry at his wife. It was a sad fact that, so deliberate and fastidious, she lacked ordinary compassion. There was indeed a tart, forbidding

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326. Anonymous, *Kokinshū*, no. 1080: "In the bamboo by the river Hinokuma, stop that your horse may drink, and I may see you."

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quality about her. She refused to see, though it was probably an unconscious refusal, that ladies who were to each other as she was to the Rokujō lady should behave with charity and forbearance. It was under her influence that the men in her service flung themselves so violently about. Genji sometimes felt uncomfortable before the proud dignity of the Rokujō lady, and he could imagine her rage and humiliation now.

He called upon her. The high priestess, her daughter, was still with her, however, and, making reverence for the sacred *sakaki* tree[327] her excuse, she declined to receive him.

She was right, of course. Yet he muttered to himself: "Why must it be so? Why cannot the two of them be a little less prickly?"

It was from his Nijō mansion, away from all this trouble, that he set forth to view the festival proper. Going over to Murasaki's rooms in the west wing, he gave Koremitsu instructions for the carriages.

"And are all our little ladies going too?" he asked. He smiled with pleasure at Murasaki, lovely in her festive dress. "We will watch it together." He stroked her hair, which seemed more lustrous than ever. "It hasn't been trimmed in a very long time. I wonder if today would be a good day for it." He summoned a soothsayer and while the man was investigating told the "little ladies" to go on ahead. They too were a delight, bright and fresh, their hair all sprucely trimmed and flowing over embroidered trousers.

He would trim Murasaki's hair himself, he said. "But see how thick it is. The scissors get all tangled up in it. Think how it will be when you grow up. Even ladies with very long hair usually cut it here at the forehead, and you've not a single lock of short hair. A person might even call it untidy."

The joy was more than a body deserved, said Shōnagon, her nurse. . . .

For the Rokujō lady the pain was unrelieved. She knew that she could expect no lessening of his coldness, and yet to steel herself and go off to Ise with her daughter—she would be lonely, she knew, and people would laugh at her. They would laugh just as heartily if she stayed in the city. Her thoughts were as the fisherman's bob at Ise.[328] Her very soul seemed to jump wildly about, and at last she fell physically ill.

Genji discounted the possibility of her going to Ise. "It is natural that you should have little use for a reprobate like myself and think of discarding me. But to stay with me would be to show admirable depths of feeling."

These remarks did not seem very helpful. Her anger and sorrow increased. A hope of relief from this agony of indecision had sent her to the river of lustration, and there she had been subjected to violence.

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327. A glossy-leafed tree related to the camellia. Its branches are used in Shinto ritual.

328. Anonymous, *Kokinshū*, no. 509: "Has my heart become the fisherman's bob at Ise? It jumps and bobs and knows not calm or resolve."

เนื้อหาคุ้มครองลิขสิทธิ์

At Sanjō, Genji's wife seemed to be in the grip of a malign spirit. It was no time for nocturnal wanderings. Genji paid only an occasional visit to his own Nijō mansion. His marriage had not been happy, but his wife was important to him and now she was carrying his child. He had prayers read in his Sanjō rooms. Several malign spirits were transferred to the medium and identified themselves, but there was one which quite refused to move. Though it did not cause great pain, it refused to leave her for so much as an instant. There was something very sinister about a spirit that eluded the powers of the most skilled exorcists. The Sanjō people went over the list of Genji's ladies one by one. Among them all, it came to be whispered, only the Rokujō lady and the lady at Nijō seemed to have been singled out for special attentions, and no doubt they were jealous. The exorcists were asked about the possibility, but they gave no very informative answers. Of the spirits that did announce themselves, none seemed to feel any deep enmity toward the lady. Their behavior seemed random and purposeless. There was the spirit of her dead nurse, for instance, and there were spirits that had been with the family for generations and had taken advantage of her weakness.

The confusion and worry continued. The lady would sometimes weep in loud wailing sobs, and sometimes be tormented by nausea and shortness of breath.

The old emperor sent repeated inquiries and ordered religious services. That the lady should be worthy of these august attentions made the possibility of her death seem even more lamentable. Reports that they quite monopolized the attention of court reached the Rokujō mansion, to further embitter its lady. No one can have guessed that the trivial incident of the carriages had so angered a lady whose sense of rivalry had not until then been strong.

Not at all herself, she left her house to her daughter and moved to one where Buddhist rites would not be out of place.[329] Sorry to hear of the move, Genji bestirred himself to call on her. The neighborhood was a strange one and he was in careful disguise. He explained his negligence in terms likely to make it seem involuntary and to bring her forgiveness, and he told her of Aoi's illness and the worry it was causing him.

"I have not been so very worried myself, but her parents are beside themselves. It has seemed best to stay with her. It would relieve me enormously if I thought you might take a generous view of it all." He knew why she was unwell, and pitied her.

They passed a tense night. As she saw him off in the dawn she found that her plans for quitting the city were not as firm as on the day before. Her rival was of the highest rank and there was this important new consideration; no doubt his affections would finally settle on her. She herself would be left in

329. They were out of place in the house of a Shinto priestess.

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solitude, wondering when he might call. The visit had only made her unhappier. In upon her gloom, in the evening, came a letter.

"Though she had seemed to be improving, she has taken a sudden and drastic turn for the worse. I cannot leave her."

The usual excuses, she thought. Yet she answered:

> "I go down the way of love and dampen my sleeves,
> and go yet further, into the muddy fields.

A pity the well is so shallow."[330]

The hand was the very best he knew. It was a difficult world, which refused to give satisfaction. Among his ladies there was none who could be dismissed as completely beneath consideration and none to whom he could give his whole love.

Despite the lateness of the hour, he got off an answer: "You only wet your sleeves—what can this mean? That your feelings are not of the deepest, I should think.

> "You only dip into the shallow waters,
> and I quite disappear into the slough?

"Do you think I would answer by letter and not in person if she were merely indisposed?"

The malign spirit was more insistent, and Aoi was in great distress. Unpleasant rumors reached the Rokujō lady, to the effect that it might be her spirit or that of her father, the late minister. Though she had felt sorry enough for herself, she had not wished ill to anyone; and might it be that the soul of one so lost in sad thoughts went wandering off by itself? She had, over the years, known the full range of sorrows, but never before had she felt so utterly miserable. There had been no release from the anger since the other lady had so insulted her, indeed behaved as if she did not exist. More than once she had the same dream: in the beautifully appointed apartments of a lady who seemed to be a rival she would push and shake the lady, and flail at her blindly and savagely. It was too terrible. Sometimes in a daze she would ask herself if her soul had indeed gone wandering off. The world was not given to speaking well of people whose transgressions had been far slighter. She would be notorious. It was common enough for the spirits of the angry dead to linger on in this world. She had thought them hateful, and it was her own lot to set a hateful example while she still lived. She must think no more about the man who had been so cruel to her. But so to think was, after all, to think.

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330. Anonymous, *Kokin rokujō* (*Zoku kokka taikan*, no. 31863): "A pity the mountain well should be so shallow. I seek to take water and only wet my sleeves."

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The high priestess, her daughter, was to have been presented at court the year before, but complications had required postponement. It was finally decided that in the Ninth Month she would go from court to her temporary shrine. The Rokujō house was thus busy preparing for two lustrations, but its lady, lost in thought, seemed strangely indifferent. A most serious state of affairs—the priestess's attendants ordered prayers. There were no really alarming symptoms. She was vaguely unwell, no more. The days passed. Genji sent repeated inquiries, but there was no relief from his worries about another invalid, a more important one.

It was still too early for Aoi to be delivered of her child. Her women were less than fully alert; and then, suddenly, she was seized with labor pains. More priests were put to more strenuous prayers. The malign spirit refused to move. The most eminent of exorcists found this stubbornness extraordinary, and could not think what to do. Then, after renewed efforts at exorcism, more intense than before, it commenced sobbing as if in pain.

"Stop for a moment, please. I want to speak to General Genji."

It was as they had thought. The women showed Genji to a place at Aoi's curtains. Thinking—for she did seem on the point of death—that Aoi had last words for Genji, her parents withdrew. The effect was grandly solemn as priests read from the Lotus Sutra in hushed voices. Genji drew the curtains back and looked down at his wife. She was heavy with child, and very beautiful. Even a man who was nothing to her would have been saddened to look at her. Long, heavy hair, bound at one side, was set off by white robes, and he thought her lovelier than when she was most carefully dressed and groomed.

He took her hand. "How awful. How awful for you." He could say no more.

Usually so haughty and forbidding, she now gazed up at him with languid eyes that were presently filled with tears. How could he fail to be moved? This violent weeping, he thought, would be for her parents, soon to be left behind, and perhaps, at this last leave-taking, for him too.

"You mustn't fret so. It can't be as bad as you think. And even if the worst comes, we will meet again. And your good mother and father: the bond between parents and children lasts through many lives. You must tell yourself that you will see them again."

"No, no. I was hurting so, I asked them to stop for a while. I had not dreamed that I would come to you like this. It is true: a troubled soul will sometimes go wandering off." The voice was gentle and affectionate.

> "Bind the hem of my robe, to keep it within,
> the grieving soul that has wandered through the skies."[331]

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331. Tying the skirt of a robe was a device for keeping an errant spirit at home.

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It was not Aoi's voice, nor was the manner hers. Extraordinary—and then he knew that it was the voice of the Rokujō lady. He was aghast. He had dismissed the talk as vulgar and ignorant fabrication, and here before his eyes he had proof that such things did actually happen, he was horrified and repelled.

"You may say so. But I don't know who you are. Identify yourself."

It was indeed she. "Aghast"—is there no stronger word? He waved the women back.

Thinking that these calmer tones meant a respite from pain, her mother came with medicine; and even as she drank it down she gave birth to a baby boy. Everyone was delighted, save the spirits that had been transferred to mediums. Chagrined at their failure, they were raising a great stir, and all in all it was a noisy and untidy scene. There was still the afterbirth to worry about. Then, perhaps because of all the prayers, it too was delivered. The grand abbot of Hiei and all the other eminent clerics departed, looking rather pleased with themselves as they mopped their foreheads. Sure that the worst was past after all the anxious days, the women allowed themselves a rest.

The prayers went on as noisily as ever, but the house was now caught up in the happy business of ministering to a pretty baby. It hummed with excitement on each of the festive nights.[332] Fine and unusual gifts came from the old emperor and from all the princes and high courtiers. Ceremonies honoring a boy baby are always interesting.

The Rokujō lady received the news with mixed feelings. She had heard that her rival was critically ill, and now the crisis had passed. She was not herself. The strangest thing was that her robes were permeated with the scent of the poppy seeds burned at exorcisms. She changed clothes repeatedly and even washed her hair, but the odor persisted. She was overcome with self-loathing. And what would others be thinking? It was a matter she could discuss with no one. She could only suffer in distraught silence.

Somewhat calmer, Genji was still horrified at the unsolicited remarks he had had from the possessive spirit. He really must get off a note to the Rokujō lady. Or should he have a talk with her? He would find it hard to be civil, and he did not wish to hurt her. In the end he made do with a note.

Aoi's illness had been critical, and the strictest vigil must be continued. Genji had been persuaded to stop his nocturnal wanderings. He still had not really talked to his wife, for she was still far from normal. The child was so beautiful as to arouse forebodings, and preparations were already under way for a most careful and elaborate education. The minister was pleased with everything save the fact that his daughter had still not recovered. But he told himself that he need not worry. A slow convalescence was to be expected after so serious an illness.

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332. There were celebrations on the third, fifth, seventh, and ninth nights.

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Especially around the eyes, the baby bore a strong resemblance to the crown prince, whom Genji suddenly felt an intense longing to see. He could not sit still. He had to be off to court.

"I have been neglecting my duties," he said to the women, "and am feeling rather guilty. I think today I will venture out. It would be good if I might see her before I go. I am not a stranger, you know."

"Quite true, sir. You of all people should be allowed near. She is badly emaciated, I fear, but that is scarcely a reason for her to hide herself from you."

And so a place was set out for him at her bedside. She answered from time to time, but in a very weak voice. Even so little, from a lady who had been given up for dead, was like a dream. He told her of those terrible days. Then he remembered how, as if pulling back from a brink, she had begun talking to him so volubly and so eagerly. A shudder of revulsion passed over him.

"There are many things I would like to say to you, but you still seem very tired."

He even prepared medicine for her. The women were filled with admiration. When had he learned to be so useful?

She was sadly worn and lay as if on the border of death, pathetic and still lovely. There was not a tangle in her lustrous hair. The thick tresses that poured over her pillows seemed to him quite beyond compare. He gazed down at her, thinking it odd that he should have felt so dissatisfied with her over the years.

"I must see my father, but I am sure I will not be needed long. How nice if we could always be like this. But your mother is with you so much, I have not wanted to seem insistent. You must get back your strength and move back to your own rooms. Your mother pampers you too much. That may be one reason why you are so slow getting well."

As he withdrew in grand court dress she lay looking after him as she had not been in the habit of doing.

There was to be a conference on promotions and appointments. The minister too set off for court, in procession with all his sons, each of them with a case to plead and determined not to leave his side.

The Sanjō mansion was almost deserted. Aoi was again seized with a strangling shortness of breath; and very soon after a messenger had been sent to court she was dead. Genji and the others left court, scarcely aware of where their feet were taking them. Appointments and promotions no longer concerned them. Since the crisis had come at about midnight there was no possibility of summoning the grand abbot and his suffragans. Everyone had thought that the worst was over, and now of course everyone was stunned, dazed, wandering aimlessly from room to room, hardly knowing a door from a wall. Messengers crowded in with condolences, but the house was in such confusion that there was no one to receive them. The intensity of the grief was almost frightening. Since malign spirits had more than once attacked the lady, her father ordered the body left as it was for two or three days in hopes that she might revive. The signs of death were more and more pronounced, however, and, in great anguish,

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the family at length accepted the truth. Genji, who had private distress to add to the general grief, thought he knew as well as anyone ever would what unhappiness love can bring. Condolences even from the people most important to him brought no comfort. The old emperor, himself much grieved, sent a personal message; and so for the minister there was new honor, happiness to temper the sorrow. Yet there was no relief from tears.

Every reasonable suggestion was accepted toward reviving the lady, but, the ravages of death being ever more apparent, there was finally no recourse but to see her to Toribe Moor. There were many heartrending scenes along the way. The crowds of mourners and priests invoking the holy name quite overflowed the wide moor. Messages continued to pour in, from the old emperor, of course, and from the empress and crown prince and all the great houses as well.

The minister was desolate. "Now in my last years to be left behind by a daughter who should have had so many years before her." No one could see him without sharing his sorrow.

Grandly the services went on through the night, and as dawn came over the sky the mourners turned back to the city, taking with them only a handful of ashes. Funerals are common enough, but Genji, who had not been present at many, was shaken as never before. Since it was late in the Eighth Month a quarter moon still hung in a sky that would have brought melancholy thoughts in any case; and the figure of his father-in-law, as if groping in pitch darkness, seemed proper to the occasion and at the same time indescribably sad.

A poem came to his lips as he gazed up into the morning sky:

> "Might these clouds be the smoke that mounts from her pyre?
> They fill my heart with feelings too deep for words."

Genji remains in seclusion at Sanjō for seven weeks, grieving for Aoi. Although what he has witnessed causes him to be revolted by the Rokujō lady at first, he cannot bring himself to break off relations with her. At last he takes leave of his in-laws, leaving his newborn son Yūgiri in their care, and returns to his own Nijō mansion.

The Nijō mansion had been cleaned and polished for his return. The whole household assembled to receive him. The higher-ranking ladies had sought to outdo one another in dress and grooming. The sight of them made him think of the sadly dejected ladies at Sanjō. Changing to less doleful clothes, he went to the west wing. The fittings, changed to welcome the autumn, were fresh and bright, and the young women and little girls were all very pretty in autumn dress. Shōnagon had taken care of everything.

Murasaki too was dressed to perfection. "You have grown," he said, lifting a low curtain back over its frame.

She looked shyly aside. Her hair and profile seemed in the lamplight even more like those of the lady he so longed for.

Bahan dengan hak cipta

He had worried about her, he said, coming nearer. "I would like to tell you everything, but it is not a very lucky sort of story. Maybe I should rest awhile in the other wing. I won't be long. From now on you will never be rid of me. I am sure you will get very bored with me."

Shōnagon was pleased but not confident. He had so many wellborn ladies, another demanding one was certain to take the place of the one who was gone. She was a dry, unsentimental sort.

Genji returned to his room. Asking Chūjō to massage his legs, he lay down to rest. The next morning he sent off a note for his baby son. He gazed on and on at the answer, from one of the women, and all the old sadness came back.

It was a tedious time. He no longer had any enthusiasm for the careless night wanderings that had once kept him busy. Murasaki was much on his mind. She seemed peerless, the nearest he could imagine to his ideal. Thinking that she was no longer too young for marriage, he had occasionally made amorous overtures; but she had not seemed to understand. They had passed their time in games of Go and *hentsugi*.[333] She was clever and she had many delicate ways of pleasing him in the most trivial diversions. He had not seriously thought of her as a wife. Now he could not restrain himself. It would be a shock, of course.

What had happened? Her women had no way of knowing when the line had been crossed. One morning Genji was up early and Murasaki stayed on and on in bed. It was not at all like her to sleep so late. Might she be unwell? As he left for his own rooms, Genji pushed an inkstone inside her bed curtains.

At length, when no one else was near, she raised herself from her pillow and saw beside it a tightly folded bit of paper. Listlessly she opened it. There was only this verse, in a casual hand:

> "Many have been the nights we have spent together
> purposelessly, these coverlets between us."

She had not dreamed he had anything of the sort on his mind. What a fool she had been, to repose her whole confidence in so gross and unscrupulous a man.

It was almost noon when Genji returned. "They say you're not feeling well. What can be the trouble? I was hoping for a game of Go."

She pulled the covers over her head. Her women discreetly withdrew. He came up beside her.

"What a way to behave, what a very unpleasant way to behave. Try to imagine, please, what these women are thinking."

He drew back the covers. She was bathed in perspiration and the hair at her forehead was matted from weeping.

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333. Or *hentsuki*. Guessing concealed parts of Chinese characters.

Bahan dengan hak cipta

"Dear me. This does not augur well at all." He tried in every way he could think of to comfort her, but she seemed genuinely upset and did not offer so much as a word in reply.

"Very well. You will see no more of me. I do have my pride."

He opened her writing box but found no note inside. Very childish of her—and he had to smile at the childishness. He stayed with her the whole day, and he thought the stubbornness with which she refused to be comforted most charming.

Boar-day sweets[334] were served in the evening. Since he was still in mourning, no great ceremony attended upon the observance. Glancing over the varied and tastefully arranged foods that had been brought in cypress boxes to Murasaki's rooms only, Genji went out to the south veranda and called Koremitsu.

"We will have more of the same tomorrow night," he said, smiling, "though not in quite such mountains. This is not the most propitious day."

Koremitsu had a quick mind. "Yes, we must be careful to choose lucky days for our beginnings." And, solemnly and deliberately: "How many rat-day sweets am I asked to provide?"[335]

"Oh, I should think one for every three that we have here."

Koremitsu went off with an air of having informed himself adequately. A clever and practical young fellow, thought Genji.

Koremitsu had the nuptial sweets prepared at his own house. He told no one what they signified.

Genji felt like a child thief. The role amused him and the affection he now felt for the girl seemed to reduce his earlier affection to the tiniest mote. A man's heart is a very strange amalgam indeed! He now thought that he could not bear to be away from her for a single night.

The sweets he had ordered were delivered stealthily, very late in the night. A man of tact, Koremitsu saw that Shōnagon, an older woman, might make Murasaki uncomfortable, and so he called her daughter.

"Slip this inside her curtains, if you will," he said, handing her an incense box. "You must see that it gets to her and to no one else. A solemn celebration. No carelessness permitted."

She thought it odd. "Carelessness? Of that quality I have had no experience."

"The very word demands care. Use it sparingly."

Young and somewhat puzzled, she did as she was told. It would seem that Genji had explained the significance of the incense box to Murasaki.

The women had no warning. When the box emerged from the curtains the next morning, the pieces of the puzzle began to fall into place. Such numbers

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334. Eaten on the first day of the boar in the Tenth Month, to ensure good health, and perhaps, too, by way of prayer for a fruitful marriage, the wild boar being a symbol of fertility.

335. There were no "rat-day sweets." Because the words for "rat" and "sleep" were homophonous and the day of the rat followed the day of the boar, Koremitsu is referring obliquely to the nuptial bed.

Bahan dengan hak cipta

of dishes—when might they have been assembled?—and stands with festooned legs, bearing sweets of a most especial sort. All in all, a splendid array. How very nice that he had gone to such pains, thought Shōnagon. He had overlooked nothing. She wept tears of pleasure and gratitude.

"But he really could have let us in on the secret," the women whispered to one another. "What can the gentleman who brought them have thought?"

When he paid the most fleeting call on his father or put in a brief appearance at court, he would be impossibly restless, overcome with longing for the girl. Even to Genji himself it seemed excessive. He had resentful letters from women with whom he had been friendly. He was sorry, but he did not wish to be separated from his bride for even a night. He had no wish to be with these others and let it seem that he was indisposed. . . .

The Sacred Tree

The Rokujō lady was more and more despondent as the time neared for her daughter's departure. Since the death of Aoi, who had caused her such pain, Genji's visits, never frequent, had stopped altogether. They had aroused great excitement among her women and now the change seemed too sudden. Genji must have very specific reasons for having turned against her—there was no explaining his extreme coldness otherwise. She would think no more about him. She would go with her daughter. There were no precedents for a mother's accompanying a high priestess to Ise, but she had as her excuse that her daughter would be helpless without her. The real reason, of course, was that she wanted to flee these painful associations.

In spite of everything, Genji was sorry when he heard of her decision. He now wrote often and almost pleadingly, but she thought a meeting out of the question at this late date. She would risk disappointing him rather than have it all begin again.

She occasionally went from the priestess's temporary shrine[336] to her Rokujō house, but so briefly and in such secrecy that Genji did not hear of the visits. The temporary shrine did not, he thought, invite casual visits. Although she was much on his mind, he let the days and months go by. His father, the old emperor, had begun to suffer from recurrent aches and cramps, and Genji had little time for himself. Yet he did not want the lady to go off to Ise thinking him completely heartless, nor did he wish to have a name at court for insensitivity. He gathered his resolve and set off for the shrine.

It was on about the seventh of the Ninth Month. The lady was under great tension, for their departure was imminent, possibly only a day or two away. He had several times asked for a word with her. He need not go inside, he said, but could wait on the veranda. She was in a torment of uncertainty but at length

336. In the western part of the city.

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reached a secret decision: she did not want to seem like a complete recluse and so she would receive him through curtains.

It was over a reed plain of melancholy beauty that he made his way to the shrine. The autumn flowers were gone and insects hummed in the wintry tangles. A wind whistling through the pines brought snatches of music to most wonderful effect, though so distant that he could not tell what was being played. Not wishing to attract attention, he had only ten outrunners, men who had long been in his service, and his guards were in subdued livery. He had dressed with great care. His more perceptive men saw how beautifully the melancholy scene set him off, and he was having regrets that he had not made the journey often. A low wattle fence, scarcely more than a suggestion of an enclosure, surrounded a complex of board-roofed buildings, as rough and insubstantial as temporary shelters.

The shrine gates, of unfinished logs, had a grand and awesome dignity for all their simplicity, and the somewhat forbidding austerity of the place was accentuated by clusters of priests talking among themselves and coughing and clearing their throats as if in warning. It was a scene quite unlike any Genji had seen before. The fire lodge[337] glowed faintly. It was all in all a lonely, quiet place, and here away from the world a lady already deep in sorrow had passed these weeks and months. Concealing himself outside the north wing, he sent in word of his arrival. The music abruptly stopped and the silence was broken only by a rustling of silken robes.

Though several messages were passed back and forth, the lady herself did not come out.

"You surely know that these expeditions are frowned upon. I find it very curious that I should be required to wait outside the sacred paling. I want to tell you everything, all my sorrows and worries."

He was right, said the women. It was more than a person could bear, seeing him out there without even a place to sit down. What was she to do? thought the lady. There were all these people about, and her daughter would expect more mature and sober conduct. No, to receive him at this late date would be altogether too undignified. Yet she could not bring herself to send him briskly on his way. She sighed and hesitated and hesitated again, and it was with great excitement that he finally heard her come forward.

"May I at least come up to the veranda?" he asked, starting up the stairs.

The evening moon burst forth and the figure she saw in its light was handsome beyond describing.

Not wishing to apologize for all the weeks of neglect, he pushed a branch of the sacred tree[338] in under the blinds.

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337. There are several theories about the use of this building. The most likely are that it was for preparing offerings and that it was for lighting torches and flares.

338. *Sakaki*, related to the camellia.

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"With heart unchanging as this evergreen,
this sacred tree, I enter the sacred gate."

She replied:

"You err with your sacred tree and sacred gate.
No beckoning cedars stand before my house."[339]

And he:

"Thinking to find you here with the holy maidens,
I followed the scent of the leaf of the sacred tree."

Though the scene did not encourage familiarity, he made bold to lean inside the blinds.

He had complacently wasted the days when he could have visited her and perhaps made her happy. He had begun to have misgivings about her, his ardor had cooled, and they had become the near strangers they were now. But she was here before him, and memories flooded back. He thought of what had been and what was to be, and he was weeping like a child.

She did not wish him to see her following his example. He felt even sadder for her as she fought to control herself, and it would seem that even now he urged her to change her plans. Gazing up into a sky even more beautiful now that the moon was setting, he poured forth all his pleas and complaints, and no doubt they were enough to erase the accumulated bitterness. She had resigned herself to what must be, and it was as she had feared. Now that she was with him again she found her resolve wavering.

Groups of young courtiers came up. It was a garden which aroused romantic urges and which a young man was reluctant to leave.

Their feelings for each other, Genji's and the lady's, had run the whole range of sorrows and irritations, and no words could suffice for all they wanted to say to each other. The dawn sky was as if made for the occasion. Not wanting to go quite yet, Genji took her hand, very gently.

"A dawn farewell is always drenched in dew,
but sad is the autumn sky as never before."

A cold wind was blowing, and a pine cricket seemed to recognize the occasion. It was a serenade to which a happy lover would not have been deaf.

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339. Anonymous, *Kokinshū*, no. 982: "Should you seek my house at the foot of Mount Miwa, you need only look for the cedars by the gate."

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Perhaps because their feelings were in such tumult, they found that the poems they might have exchanged were eluding them.

At length the lady replied:

> "An autumn farewell needs nothing to make it sadder.
> Enough of your songs, O crickets on the moors!"

It would do no good to pour forth all the regrets again. He made his departure, not wanting to be seen in the broadening daylight. His sleeves were made wet along the way with dew and with tears.

The lady, not as strong as she would have wished, was sunk in a sad reverie. The shadowy figure in the moonlight and the perfume he left behind had the younger women in a state only just short of swooning.

"What kind of journey could be important enough, I ask you," said one of them, choking with tears, "to make her leave such a man?"

His letter the next day was so warm and tender that again she was tempted to reconsider. But it was too late: a return to the old indecision would accomplish nothing. Genji could be very persuasive even when he did not care a great deal for a woman, and this was no ordinary parting. He sent the finest travel robes and supplies, for the lady and for her women as well. They were no longer enough to move her. It was as if the thought had only now come to her of the ugly name she seemed fated to leave behind.

In the Tenth Month of the same year, Genji's father the old emperor dies. On his deathbed, he instructs his son, the Suzaku emperor, to look to Genji for advice in public affairs and to be good to the crown prince. The power of the minister of the right and the Kokiden lady is now uncontested. The following year, Genji makes further overtures to Fujitsubo, driving her to become a nun after the anniversary of the old emperor's death. In the summer of the next year, the minister of the right catches Genji with Oborozukiyo, now a favored concubine of the Suzaku emperor. The Kokiden faction uses this episode as a pretext to destroy Genji politically.

Suma

In the Third Month of the year following his scandal with Oborozukiyo, Genji, now twenty-five, chooses to go into voluntary exile in Suma, an isolated area southwest of the capital, near the sea, rather than to face further adversity in the capital. He is accompanied by only a few close associates.

In great sorrow he boarded the boat that would take him to Suma. It was a long spring day and there was a tail wind, and by late afternoon he had reached the strand where he was to live. He had never before been on such a journey,

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however short. All the sad, exotic things along the way were new to him. The Oe station[340] was in ruins, with only a grove of pines to show where it had stood.

> "More remote, I fear, my place of exile
> than storied ones in lands beyond the seas."

The surf came in and went out again. "I envy the waves," he whispered to himself.[341] It was a familiar poem, but it seemed new to those who heard him, and sad as never before. Looking back toward the city, he saw that the mountains were enshrouded in mist. It was as though he had indeed come "three thousand leagues."[342] The spray from the oars brought thoughts scarcely to be borne.

> "Mountain mists cut off that ancient village.
> Is the sky I see the sky that shelters it?"

Not far away Yukihira had lived in exile, "dripping brine from the sea grass."[343] Genji's new house was some distance from the coast, in mountains utterly lonely and desolate. The fences and everything within were new and strange. The grass-roofed cottages, the reed-roofed galleries—or so they seemed—were interesting enough in their way. It was a dwelling proper to a remote littoral, and different from any he had known. Having once had a taste for out-of-the-way places, he might have enjoyed this Suma had the occasion been different.

Yoshikiyo had appointed himself a sort of confidential steward. He summoned the overseers of Genji's several manors in the region and assigned them to necessary tasks. Genji watched admiringly. In very quick order he had a rather charming new house. A deep brook flowed through the garden with a pleasing murmur, new plantings were set out; and when finally he was beginning to feel a little at home he could scarcely believe that it was all real. The governor of the province, an old retainer, discreetly performed numerous services. All in all it was a brighter and livelier place than he had a right to expect, although the fact that there was no one whom he could really talk to kept him from forgetting that it was a house of exile, strange and alien. How was he to get through the months and years ahead? . . .

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340. In the heart of present-day Osaka. It was used by high priestesses on their way to and from Ise.

341. Attributed to Ariwara no Narihira, *The Tales of Ise*, sec. 7: "Strong my yearning for what I have left behind. I envy the waves that go back whence they came."

342. *Collected Works of Bo Juyi*, book 13, "Lines Written on the Winter Solstice, in the Arbutus Hall."

343. Ariwara no Yukihira, *Kokinshū*, no. 962: "If someone should inquire for me, reply: 'He idles at Suma, dripping brine from the sea grass.'"

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At Suma, melancholy autumn winds were blowing. Genji's house was some distance from the sea, but at night the wind that blew over the barriers, now as in Yukihira's day, seemed to bring the surf to his bedside. Autumn was hushed and lonely at a place of exile. He had few companions. One night when they were all asleep he raised his head from his pillow and listened to the roar of the wind and of the waves, as if at his ear. Though he was unaware that he wept, his tears were enough to set his pillow afloat.[344] He plucked a few notes on his koto, but the sound only made him sadder.

> "The waves on the strand, like moans of helpless longing.
> The winds—like messengers from those who grieve?"

He had awakened the others. They sat up, and one by one they were in tears.

This would not do. Because of him they had been swept into exile, leaving families from whom they had never before been parted. It must be very difficult for them, and his own gloom could scarcely be making things easier. So he set about cheering them. During the day he would invent games and make jokes, and set down this and that poem on multicolored patchwork, and paint pictures on fine specimens of figured Chinese silk. Some of his larger paintings were masterpieces. He had long ago been told of this Suma coast and these hills and had formed a picture of them in his mind, and he found now that his imagination had fallen short of the actuality. What a pity, said his men, that they could not summon Tsunenori and Chieda[345] and other famous painters of the day to add colors to Genji's monochromes. This resolute cheerfulness had the proper effect. His men, four or five of whom were always with him, would not have dreamed of leaving him.

There was a profusion of flowers in the garden. Genji came out, when the evening colors were at their best, to a gallery from which he had a good view of the coast. His men felt chills of apprehension as they watched him, for the loneliness of the setting made him seem like a visitor from another world. In a dark robe tied loosely over singlets of figured white and aster-colored trousers, he announced himself as "a disciple of the Buddha" and slowly intoned a sutra, and his men thought that they had never heard a finer voice. From offshore came the voices of fishermen raised in song. The barely visible boats were like little seafowl on an utterly lonely sea, and as he brushed away a tear induced by the splashing of oars and the calls of wild geese overhead, the white of his

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344. This extravagant figure of speech is to be found in *Kokin rokujō* (*Zoku kokka taikan*, no. 34087).

345. Tsunenori seems to have been active about three-quarters of a century earlier; so too, presumably, was Chieda.

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hand against the jet black of his rosary was enough to bring comfort to men who had left their families behind.

> "Might they be the companions of those I long for?
> Their cries ring sadly through the sky of their journey."

This was Yoshikiyo's reply:

> "I know not why they bring these thoughts of old,
> these wandering geese. They were not then my comrades."

And Koremitsu's:

> "No colleagues of mine, these geese beyond the clouds.
> They chose to leave their homes, and I did not."

And that of the guards officer who had cut such a proud figure on the day of the Kamo lustration:

> "Sad are their cries as they wing their way from home.
> They still find solace, for they still have comrades.

It is cruel to lose one's comrades."

His father had been posted to Hitachi, but he himself had come with Genji. He contrived, for all that must have been on his mind, to seem cheerful.

A radiant moon had come out. They were reminded that it was the harvest full moon. Genji could not take his eyes from it. On other such nights there had been concerts at court, and perhaps they of whom he was thinking would be gazing at this same moon and thinking of him.

"My thoughts are of you, old friend," he sang, "two thousand leagues away."[346] His men were in tears.

Until now, Genji has stayed in touch not only with women to whom he is close—Murasaki, Fujitsubo, the Rokujō lady, and Oborozukiyo—but also with his brothers and other courtiers. This enrages the Kokiden lady, who pressures them to stop corresponding with him. Life at Suma becomes lonelier than ever through the winter and into the new year.

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346. *Bo Juyi's Collected Works*, book 14, "On the Evening of the Full Moon of the Eighth Month."

Bahan dengan hak cipta

The Akashi coast was a very short distance away. Yoshikiyo remembered the daughter of the former governor, now a monk, and wrote to her. She did not answer.

"I would like to see you for a few moments sometime at your convenience," came a note from her father. "There is something I want to ask you."

Yoshikiyo was not encouraged. He would look very silly if he went to Akashi only to be turned away. He did not go.

The former governor was an extremely proud and intractable man. The incumbent governor was all-powerful in the province, but the eccentric old man had no wish to marry his daughter to such an upstart. He learned of Genji's presence at Suma.

"I hear that the shining Genji is out of favor," he said to his wife, "and that he has come to Suma. What a rare stroke of luck—the chance we have been waiting for. We must offer our girl."

"Completely out of the question. People from the city tell me that he has any number of fine ladies of his own and that he has reached out for one of the emperor's. That is why the scandal. What interest can he possibly take in a country lump like her?"

"You don't understand the first thing about it. My own views couldn't be more different. We must make our plans. We must watch for a chance to bring him here." His mind was quite made up, and he had the look of someone whose plans were not easily changed. The finery which he had lavished upon house and daughter quite dazzled the eye.

"He may be ever so grand a grand gentleman," persisted the mother, "but it hardly seems the right and sensible thing to choose of all people a man who has been sent into exile for a serious crime. It might just possibly be different if he were likely to look at her—but no. You must be joking."

"A serious crime! Why in China too exactly this sort of thing happens to every single person who has remarkable talents and stands out from the crowd. And who do you think he is? His late mother was the daughter of my uncle, the Lord Inspector. She had talent and made a name for herself, and when there wasn't enough of the royal love to go around, the others were jealous, and finally they killed her. But she left behind a son who was a royal joy and comfort. Ladies should have pride and high ambitions. I may be a bumpkin myself, but I doubt that he will think her entirely beneath contempt."

Though the girl was no great beauty, she was intelligent and sensitive and had a gentle grace of which someone of a far higher rank would have been proud. She was reconciled to her sad lot. No one among the great persons of the land was likely to think her worth a glance. The prospect of marrying someone nearer her station in life revolted her. If she was left behind by those on whom she depended, she would become a nun, or perhaps throw herself into the sea.

Her father had done everything for her. He sent her twice a year to the Sumiyoshi Shrine, hoping that the god might be persuaded to notice her. . . .

Bahan dengan hak cipta

It was the day of the serpent, the first such day in the Third Month.

"The day when a man who has worries goes down and washes them away," said one of his men, admirably informed, it would seem, in all of the annual observances.

Wishing to have a look at the seashore, Genji set forth. Plain, rough curtains were strung up among the trees, and a soothsayer who was doing the circuit of the province was summoned to perform the lustration.

Genji thought he could see something of himself in the rather large doll being cast off to sea, bearing away sins and tribulations.

> "Cast away to drift on an alien vastness,
> I grieve for more than a doll cast out to sea."

The bright, open seashore showed him to wonderful advantage. The sea stretched placid into measureless distances. He thought of all that had happened to him, and all that was still to come.

> "You eight hundred myriad gods must surely help me,
> for well you know that blameless I stand before you."

Suddenly a wind came up and even before the services were finished the sky was black. Genji's men rushed about in confusion. Rain came pouring down, completely without warning. Though the obvious course would have been to return straightway to the house, there had been no time to send for umbrellas. The wind was now a howling tempest, everything that had not been tied down was scuttling off across the beach. The surf was biting at their feet. The sea was white, as if spread over with white linen. Fearful every moment of being struck down, they finally made their way back to the house.

"I've never seen anything like it," said one of the men. "Winds do come up from time to time, but not without warning. It is all very strange and very terrible."

The lightning and thunder seemed to announce the end of the world, and the rain to beat its way into the ground; and Genji sat calmly reading a sutra. The thunder subsided in the evening, but the wind went on through the night.

"Our prayers seem to have been answered. A little more and we would have been carried off. I've heard that tidal waves do carry people off before they know what is happening to them, but I've not seen anything like this."

Toward dawn sleep was at length possible. A man whom he did not recognize came to Genji in a dream.

"The court summons you." He seemed to be reaching for Genji. "Why do you not go?"

It would be the king of the sea, who was known to have a partiality for handsome men. Genji decided that he could stay no longer at Suma.

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Akashi

The days went by and the thunder and rain continued. What was Genji to do? People would laugh if, in this extremity, out of favor at court, he were to return to the city. Should he then seek a mountain retreat? But if it were to be noised about that a storm had driven him away, then he would cut a ridiculous figure in history.

His dreams were haunted by that same apparition. Messages from the city almost entirely ceased coming as the days went by without a break in the storms. Might he end his days at Suma? No one was likely to come calling in these tempests.

A messenger did come from Murasaki, a sad, sodden creature. Had they passed in the street, Genji would scarcely have known whether he was man or beast, and of course would not have thought of inviting him to come near. Now the man brought a surge of pleasure and affection—though Genji could not help asking himself whether the storm had weakened his moorings.

Murasaki's letter, long and melancholy, said in part: "The terrifying deluge goes on without a break, day after day. Even the skies are closed off, and I am denied the comfort of gazing in your direction.

> "What do they work, the sea winds down at Suma?
> At home, my sleeves are assaulted by wave after wave."

Tears so darkened his eyes that it was as if they were inviting the waters to rise higher.

The man said that the storms had been fierce in the city too, and that a special reading of the Prajnaparamita Sutra had been ordered. "The streets are all closed and the great gentlemen can't get to court, and everything has closed down."

The man spoke clumsily and haltingly, but he did bring news. Genji summoned him near and had him questioned.

"It's not the way it usually is. You don't usually have rain going on for days without a break and the wind howling on and on. Everyone is terrified. But it's worse here. They haven't had this hail beating right through the ground and thunder going on and on and not letting a body think." The terror written so plainly on his face did nothing to improve the spirits of the people at Suma.

Might it be the end of the world? From dawn the next day the wind was so fierce and the tide so high and the surf so loud that it was as if the crags and the mountains must fall. The horror of the thunder and lightning was beyond description. Panic spread at each new flash. For what sins, Genji's men asked, were they being punished? Were they to perish without another glimpse of their mothers and fathers, their dear wives and children?

Genji tried to tell himself that he had been guilty of no misdeed for which he must perish here on the seashore. Such were the panic and confusion around

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him, however, that he bolstered his confidence with special offerings to the god of Sumiyoshi.

"O you of Sumiyoshi who protect the lands about: if indeed you are an avatar of the Blessed One, then you must save us."

His men were of course fearful for their lives; but the thought that so fine a gentleman (and in these deplorable circumstances) might be swept beneath the waters seemed altogether too tragic. The less distraught among them prayed in loud voices to this and that favored deity, Buddhist and Shinto, that their own lives be taken if it meant that his might be spared.

They faced Sumiyoshi and prayed and made vows: "Our lord was reared deep in the fastnesses of the palace, and all blessings were his. You who, in the abundance of your mercy, have brought strength through these lands to all who have sunk beneath the weight of their troubles: in punishment for what crimes do you call forth these howling waves? Judge his case if you will, you gods of heaven and earth. Guiltless, he is accused of a crime, stripped of his offices, driven from his house and city, left as you see him with no relief from the torture and the lamentation. And now these horrors, and even his life seems threatened. Why? we must ask. Because of sins in some other life, because of crimes in this one? If your vision is clear, O you gods, then take all this away."

Genji offered prayers to the king of the sea and countless other gods as well. The thunder was increasingly more terrible, and finally the gallery adjoining his rooms was struck by lightning. Flames sprang up and the gallery was destroyed. The confusion was immense; the whole world seemed to have gone mad. Genji was moved to a building out in back, a kitchen or something of the sort it seemed to be. It was crowded with people of every station and rank. The clamor was almost enough to drown out the lightning and thunder. Night descended over a sky already as black as ink.

Presently the wind and rain subsided and stars began to come out. The kitchen being altogether too mean a place, a move back to the main hall was suggested. The charred remains of the gallery were an ugly sight, however, and the hall had been badly muddied and all the blinds and curtains blown away. Perhaps, Genji's men suggested somewhat tentatively, it might be better to wait until dawn. Genji sought to concentrate upon the holy name, but his agitation continued to be very great.

He opened a wattled door and looked out. The moon had come up. The line left by the waves was white and dangerously near, and the surf was still high. There was no one here whom he could turn to, no student of the deeper truths who could discourse upon past and present and perhaps explain these wild events. All the fisherfolk had gathered at what they had heard was the house of a great gentleman from the city. They were as noisy and impossible to communicate with as a flock of birds, but no one thought of telling them to leave.

"If the wind had kept up just a little longer," someone said, "absolutely everything would have been swept under. The gods did well by us."

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There are no words—"lonely" and "forlorn" seem much too weak—to describe his feelings.

> "Without the staying hand of the king of the sea,
> the roar of the eight hundred waves would have taken us under."

Genji was as exhausted as if all the buffets and fires of the tempest had been aimed at him personally. He dozed off, his head against some nondescript piece of furniture.

The old emperor came to him, quite as when he had lived. "And why are you in this wretched place?" He took Genji's hand and pulled him to his feet. "You must do as the god of Sumiyoshi tells you. You must put out to sea immediately. You must leave this shore behind."

"Since I last saw you, sir," said Genji, overjoyed, "I have suffered an unbroken series of misfortunes. I had thought of throwing myself into the sea."

"That you must not do. You are undergoing brief punishment for certain sins. I myself did not commit any conscious crimes while I reigned, but a person is guilty of transgressions and oversights without his being aware of them. I am doing penance and have no time to look back toward this world. But an echo of your troubles came to me and I could not stand idle. I fought my way through the sea and up to this shore and I am very tired; but now that I am here I must see to a matter in the city." And he disappeared.

Genji called after him, begging to be taken along. He looked around him. There was only the bright face of the moon. His father's presence had been too real for a dream, so real that he must still be here. Clouds traced sad lines across the sky. It had been clear and palpable, the figure he had so longed to see even in a dream, so clear that he could almost catch an afterimage. His father had come through the skies to help him in what had seemed the last extremity of his sufferings. He was deeply grateful, even to the tempests; and in the aftermath of the dream he was happy.

Quite different emotions now ruffled his serenity. He forgot his immediate troubles and only regretted that his father had not stayed longer. Perhaps he would come again. Genji would have liked to go back to sleep, but he lay wakeful until daylight.

A little boat had pulled in at the shore and two or three men came up.

"The revered monk who was once governor of Harima has come from Akashi. If the former Minamoto councillor, Lord Yoshikiyo, is here, we wonder if we might trouble him to come down and hear the details of our mission."

Yoshikiyo pretended to be surprised and puzzled. "He was once among my closer acquaintances here in Harima, but we had a falling out and it has been some time since we last exchanged letters. What can have brought him through such seas in that little boat?"

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Genji's dream had given intimations. He sent Yoshikiyo down to the boat immediately. Yoshikiyo marveled that it could even have been launched upon such a sea.

These were the details of the mission, from the mouth of the old governor: "Early this month a strange figure came to me in a dream. I listened, though somewhat incredulously, and was told that on the thirteenth there would be a clear and present sign. I was to ready a boat and make for this shore when the waves subsided. I did ready a boat, and then came this savage wind and lightning. I thought of numerous foreign sovereigns who have received instructions in dreams on how to save their lands, and I concluded that even at the risk of incurring his ridicule I must on the day appointed inform your lord of the import of the dream. And so I did indeed put out to sea. A strange jet blew all the way and brought us to this shore. I cannot think of it except as divine intervention. And might I ask whether there have been corresponding manifestations here? I do hate to trouble you, but might I ask you to communicate all of this to your lord?"

Yoshikiyo quietly relayed the message, which brought new considerations. There had been these various unsettling signs conveyed to Genji dreaming and waking. The possibility of being laughed at for having departed these shores under threat now seemed the lesser risk. To turn his back on what might be a real offer of help from the gods would be to ask for still worse misfortunes. It was not easy to reject ordinary advice, and personal reservations counted for little when the advice came from great eminences. "Defer to them; they will cause you no reproaches," a wise man of old once said.[347] He could scarcely face worse misfortunes by deferring than by not deferring, and he did not seem likely to gain great merit and profit by hesitating out of concern for his brave name. Had not his own father come to him? What room was there for doubts?

He sent back his answer: "I have been through a great deal in this strange place, and I hear nothing at all from the city. I but gaze upon a sun and moon going I know not where as comrades from my old home; and now comes this angler's boat, happy tidings on an angry wind.[348] Might there be a place along your Akashi coast where I can hide myself?"

The old man was delighted. Genji's men pressed him to set out even before sunrise. Taking along only four or five of his closest attendants, he boarded the boat. That strange wind came up again and they were at Akashi as if they had flown. It was very near, within crawling distance, so to speak; but still the workings of the wind were strange and marvelous.

The Akashi coast was every bit as beautiful as he had been told it was. He would have preferred fewer people, but on the whole he was pleased. Along

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347. Laozi, say early commentaries; but the advice is not to be found in his extant writings.

348. Ki no Tsurayuki, *Gosenshū*, no. 1225: "An angler's boat upon the waves that pound us, happy tidings on an angry wind."

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the coast and in the hills the old monk had put up numerous buildings with which to take advantage of the four seasons: a reed-roofed beach cottage with fine seasonal vistas; beside a mountain stream a chapel of some grandeur and dignity, suitable for rites and meditation and invocation of the holy name; and rows of storehouses where the harvest was put away and a bountiful life assured for the years that remained. Fearful of the high tides, the old monk had sent his daughter and her women off to the hills. The house on the beach was at Genji's disposal.

The sun was rising as Genji left the boat and got into a carriage. This first look by daylight at his new guest brought a happy smile to the old man's lips. He felt as if the accumulated years were falling away and as if new years had been granted him. He gave silent thanks to the god of Sumiyoshi. He might have seemed ridiculous as he bustled around seeing to Genji's needs, as if the radiance of the sun and the moon had become his private property; but no one laughed at him.

I need not describe the beauty of the Akashi coast. The careful attention that had gone into the house and the rocks and plantings of the garden, the graceful line of the coast—it was infinitely pleasanter than Suma, and one would not have wished to ask a less than profoundly sensitive painter to paint it. The house was in quiet good taste. The old man's way of life was as Genji had heard it described, hardly more rustic than that of the grandees at court. In sheer luxury, indeed, he rather outdid them.

Genji remains in Akashi for nearly a year and a half, during which the Akashi priest succeeds in bringing about a union between Genji and his daughter. The same violent storm that hit Suma also hit the capital, bringing other omens and disturbances with it: the Kiritsubo emperor appears to his son, the reigning Suzaku emperor, in a dream, reproving him for his treatment of Genji; subsequently, the Suzaku emperor suffers a painful eye ailment. The Kokiden lady falls ill, and the minister of the right dies. Finally, a year later, Suzaku defies Kokiden and grants Genji a pardon, summoning him back to the capital in the Seventh Month. Early the following year, Suzaku yields the throne to Reizei, Genji's son by Fujitsubo. Genji returns to power. His liaison with the Akashi lady results in a daughter, who is eventually brought to the capital to be raised by Murasaki. Shortly thereafter, Fujitsubo dies. Reizei is informed of his true parentage and tries to abdicate in favor of his father, Genji. Genji refuses but rises rapidly in political rank and eventually is appointed chancellor. In his thirty-fourth year, Genji constructs a lavish residence, the Rokujō mansion, a virtual court where he gathers all his women around him. Among these women is Tamakazura, a lost daughter of Tō no Chūjō whom Genji discovered and adopted as though she were his own daughter.

Fireflies

. . . The rains of early summer continued without a break, even gloomier than in most years. The ladies at Rokujō amused themselves with illustrated romances. The Akashi lady, a talented painter, sent pictures to her daughter.

Material com direitos autorais

Tamakazura was the most avid reader of all. She quite lost herself in pictures and stories and would spend whole days with them. Several of her young women were well informed in literary matters. She came upon all sorts of interesting and shocking incidents (she could not be sure whether they were true or not), but she found little that resembled her own unfortunate career. There was *The Tale of Sumiyoshi*, popular in its day, of course, and still well thought of. She compared the plight of the heroine, within a hairbreadth of being taken by the chief accountant,[349] with her own escape from the Higo person.[350]

Genji could not help noticing the clutter of pictures and manuscripts. "What a nuisance this all is," he said one day. "Women seem to have been born to be cheerfully deceived. They know perfectly well that in all these old stories there is scarcely a shred of truth, and yet they are captured and made sport of by the whole range of trivialities and go on scribbling them down, quite unaware that in these warm rains their hair is all dank and knotted."

He smiled. "What would we do if there were not these old romances to relieve our boredom? But amid all the fabrication I must admit that I do find real emotions and plausible chains of events. We can be quite aware of the frivolity and the idleness and still be moved. We have to feel a little sorry for a charming princess in the depths of gloom. Sometimes a series of absurd and grotesque incidents which we know to be quite improbable holds our interest, and afterward we must blush that it was so. Yet even then we can see what it was that held us. Sometimes I stand and listen to the stories they read to my daughter, and I think to myself that there certainly are good talkers in the world. I think that these yarns must come from people much practiced in lying. But perhaps that is not the whole of the story?"

She pushed away her inkstone. "I can see that that would be the view of someone much given to lying himself. For my part, I am convinced of their truthfulness."

He laughed. "I have been rude and unfair to your romances, haven't I. They have set down and preserved happenings from the age of the gods to our own. *The Chronicles of Japan* and the rest are a mere fragment of the whole truth. It is your romances that fill in the details.

"We are not told of things that happened to specific people exactly as they happened; but the beginning is when there are good things and bad things, things that happen in this life which one never tires of seeing and hearing about, things which one cannot bear not to tell of and must pass on for all generations. If the storyteller wishes to speak well, then he chooses the good things; and if he wishes to hold the reader's attention he chooses bad things, extraordinarily bad things. Good things and bad things alike, they are things of this world and no other.

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349. There is no such incident in the version that survives today.

350. A rustic man who had pursued her in Kyushu, before her arrival in the capital and adoption by Genji.

Material com direitos autorais

"Writers in other countries approach the matter differently. Old stories in our own are different from new. There are differences in the degree of seriousness. But to dismiss them as lies is itself to depart from the truth. Even in the writ which the Buddha drew from his noble heart are parables, devices for pointing obliquely at the truth. To the ignorant they may seem to operate at cross purposes. The Greater Vehicle is full of them, but the general burden is always the same. The difference between enlightenment and confusion is of about the same order as the difference between the good and the bad in a romance. If one takes the generous view, then nothing is empty and useless."

He now seemed bent on establishing the uses of fiction.

"But tell me: is there in any of your old stories a proper, upright fool like myself?" He came closer. "I doubt that even among the most unworldly of your heroines there is one who manages to be as distant and unnoticing as you are. Suppose the two of us set down our story and give the world a really interesting one."

"I think it very likely that the world will take notice of our curious story even if we do not go to the trouble." She hid her face in her sleeves.

"Our curious story? Yes, incomparably curious, I should think." Smiling and playful, he pressed nearer.

> "Beside myself, I search through all the books,
> and come upon no daughter so unfilial.

"You are breaking one of the commandments."

He stroked her hair as he spoke, but she refused to look up. Presently, however, she managed a reply:

> "So too it is with me. I too have searched,
> and found no cases quite so unparental."

Somewhat chastened, he pursued the matter no further. Yet one worried. What was to become of her?

Murasaki too had become addicted to romances. Her excuse was that Genji's little daughter insisted on being read to.

"Just see what a fine one this is," she said, showing Genji an illustration for *The Tale of Kumano*.[351] The young girl in tranquil and confident slumber made her think of her own younger self. "How precocious even very little children seem to have been. I suppose I might have set myself up as a specimen of the slow, plodding variety. I would have won that competition easily."

Genji might have been the hero of some rather more eccentric stories.

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351. Or *The Tale of Komano*. It does not survive.

Material com direitos autorais

"You must not read love stories to her. I doubt that clandestine affairs would arouse her unduly, but we would not want her to think them commonplace."

What would Tamakazura have made of the difference between his remarks to her and these remarks to Murasaki?

"I would not of course offer the wanton ones as a model," replied Murasaki, "but I would have doubts too about the other sort. Lady Atemiya in *The Tale of the Hollow Tree*, for instance. She is always very brisk and efficient and in control of things, and she never makes mistakes; but there is something unwomanly about her cool manner and clipped speech."

"I should imagine that it is in real life as in fiction. We are all human and we all have our ways. It is not easy to be unerringly right. Proper, well-educated parents go to great trouble over a daughter's education and tell themselves that they have done well if something quiet and demure emerges. It seems a pity when defects come to light one after another and people start asking what her good parents can possibly have been up to. Yet the rewards are very great when a girl's manner and behavior seem just right for her station. Even then empty praise is not satisfying. One knows that the girl is not perfect and looks at her more critically than before. I would not wish my own daughter to be praised by people who have no standards."

He was genuinely concerned that she acquit herself well in the tests that lay before her.

Wicked stepmothers are of course standard fare for the romancers, and he did not want them poisoning relations between Murasaki and the child. He spent a great deal of time selecting romances he thought suitable, and ordered them copied and illustrated. . . .

New Herbs: Part One

Genji is now forty years old. His daughter by the Akashi lady has gone to court as a consort to the crown prince. He has retired as chancellor and has been accorded benefices equivalent to those of a retired emperor. Meanwhile, the Suzaku emperor has fallen ill and is worried about the future of his favorite daughter, the Third Princess. Although he considers Genji's son Yūgiri, Tō no Chūjō's son Kashiwagi, and Genji's half brother Prince Hotaru as potential husbands for her, he asks Genji to take care of her. Despite his fear of hurting Murasaki, Genji agrees to marry the girl (spurred on, perhaps, by the fact that, like Murasaki, the Third Princess is a niece of Fujitsubo).

Genji was worried. Murasaki had heard vague rumors, but she had told herself that it could not be. Genji had once been very serious about the high priestess of Ise, it seemed, but in the end he had held himself back. She had not worried a great deal, and asked no questions.

How would she take this news? Genji knew that his feelings toward her would not change, or if they did it would be in the direction of greater intensity.

Bahan dengan hak cipta

But only time could assure her of that fact, and there would be cruel uncertainty in the meantime. Nothing had been allowed to come between them in recent years, and the thought of having a secret from her for even a short time made him very unhappy.

He said nothing to her that night.

The next day was dark, with flurries of snow.

"I went yesterday to call on the Suzaku emperor. He is in very poor health indeed." It was in the course of a leisurely conversation that Genji brought the matter up. "He said many sad things, but what seems to trouble him most as he goes off to his retreat is the future of the Third Princess." And he described that part of the interview. "I was really so extremely sorry for him that I found it impossible to refuse. I suppose people will make a great thing of it. The thought of taking a bride at my age has seemed so utterly preposterous that I have tried through this and that intermediary to suggest a certain want of ardor. But to see him in person and have it directly from him—I simply could not bring myself to refuse. Do you think that when the time does finally come for him to go off into the mountains we might have her come here? Would that upset you terribly? Please do not let it. Trust me, and tell yourself what is the complete truth, that nothing is going to change. She has more right to feel insecure than you do. But I am sure that we can arrange things happily enough for her too."

She was always torturing herself over the smallest of his affairs, and he had dreaded telling her of this one.

But her reply was quiet and unassertive, "Yes, it is sad for her. The only thing that worries me is the possibility that she might feel less than completely at home. I shall be very happy if our being so closely related persuades her that I am no stranger."

"How silly that this very willingness to accept things should bother me. But it does. It makes me start looking for complications, and I am sure I will feel guiltier as the two of you get used to each other. You must pay no attention to what people say. Rumors are strange things. It is impossible to know where they come from, but there they are, like living creatures bent on poisoning relations between a man and a woman. You must listen only to yourself and let matters take their course. Do not start imagining things, and do not torture yourself with empty jealousies."

It was a tempest out of the blue which there was no escaping. Murasaki was determined that she would not complain or give any hint of resentment. She knew that neither her wishes nor her advice would have made any difference. She did not want the world to think that she had been crushed by what had to come. There was her sharp-tongued stepmother, so quick to blame and to gloat. . . . She was certain to gloat over this, and to say that Murasaki deserved exactly what had come to her. Though very much in control of herself,

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Murasaki was prey to these worries. The very durability of her relations with Genji was sure to make people laugh harder. But she gave no hint of her unhappiness.

In due course, the Third Princess is installed in the Rokujō mansion.

It was an unsettling time for Murasaki. No doubt Genji was giving an honest view of the matter when he said that she would not be overwhelmed by the Third Princess. Yet for the first time in years she felt genuinely threatened. The new lady was young and, it would seem, rather showy in her ways, and of such a rank that Murasaki could not ignore her. All very unsettling; but she gave no hint of her feelings, and indeed helped with all the arrangements. Genji saw more than ever that there was really no one like her.

The Third Princess was, as her father had said, a mere child. She was tiny and immature physically, and she gave a general impression of still greater, indeed quite extraordinary, immaturity. He thought of Murasaki when he had first taken her in. She had even then been interesting. She had had a character of her own. The Third Princess was like a baby. Well, thought Genji, the situation had something to recommend it: she was not likely to intrude and make Murasaki unhappy with fits of jealousy. Yet he did think he might have hoped for someone a *little* more interesting. For the first three nights he was faithfully in attendance upon her. Murasaki was unhappy but said nothing. She gave herself up to her thoughts and to such duties, now performed with unusual care, as scenting his robes. He thought her splendid. Why, he asked himself, whatever the pressures and the complications, had he taken another wife? He had been weak and he had given an impression of inconstancy, and brought it all upon himself. Yūgiri had escaped because the Suzaku emperor had seen what an unshakable pillar of fidelity he was.

Genji was near tears. "Please excuse me just this one more night. I have no alternative. If after this I neglect you, then you may be sure that I will be angrier with myself than you can ever be with me. We do have to consider her father's feelings."

"Do not ask us bystanders," she said, a faint smile on her lips, "to tell you how to behave."

He turned away, chin in hand, to hide his confusion.

> "I had grown so used to thinking it would not change.
> And now, before my very eyes, it changes."

He took up the paper on which she had jotted down old poems that fitted her mood as well as this poem of her own. It was not the most perfect of poems, perhaps, but it was honest and to the point.

Bahan dengan hak cipta

"Life must end. It is a transient world.
The one thing lasting is the bond between us."

He did not want to leave, but she said that he was only making things more difficult for her. He was wearing the soft robes which she had so carefully scented. She had over the years seen new threats arise only to be turned away, and she had finally come to think that there would be no more. Now this had happened, and everyone was talking. She knew how susceptible he had been in his earlier years, and now the whole future seemed uncertain. It was remarkable that she showed no sign of her disquiet.

Her women were talking as of the direst happenings.

"Who would have expected it? He has always kept himself well supplied with women, but none of them has seemed the sort to raise a challenge. So things have been quiet. I doubt that our lady will let them defeat her—but we must be careful. The smallest mistake could make things very difficult."

Murasaki pretended that nothing at all was amiss. She talked pleasantly with them until late in the night. She feared that silence on the most important subject might make it seem more important than it was.

"I am so glad that she has come to us. We have had a full house, but I sometimes think he has been a little bored with us, poor man. None of us is grand enough to be really interesting. I somehow hope that we will be the best of friends. Perhaps it is because they say that she is still a mere child. And here you all are digging a great chasm between us. If we were of the same rank, or perhaps if I had some slight reason to think myself a little her superior, then I would feel that I had to be careful. But as it is—you may think it impertinent of me to say so—I only want to be friendly."

Nakatsukasa and Chūjō exchanged glances. "Such kindness," one of them, I do not know which, would seem to have muttered. They had once been recipients of Genji's attentions but they had been with Murasaki for some years now, and they were among her firmer allies.

Inquiries came from the ladies in the other quarters, some of them suggesting that they who had long ago given up their ambitions might be the more fortunate ones. Murasaki sighed. They meant to be kind, of course, but they were not making things easier. Well, there was no use in tormenting herself over things she could not change, and the inconstancy of the other sex was among them.

Her women would think it odd if she spent the whole night talking with them. She withdrew to her boudoir and they helped her into bed. She was lonely, and the presence of all these women did little to disguise the fact. She thought of the years of his exile. She had feared that they would not meet again, but the agony of waiting for word that he was still alive was in itself a sort of

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distraction from the sorrow and longing. She sought to comfort herself now with the thought that those confused days could so easily have meant the end of everything.

The wind was cold. Not wanting her women to know that she could not sleep, she lay motionless until she ached from the effort. Still deep in the cold night, the call of the first cock seemed to emphasize the loneliness and sorrow.

She may not have been in an agony of longing, but she was deeply troubled, and perhaps for that reason she came to Genji in his dreams. His heart was racing. Might something have happened to her? He lay waiting for the cock as if for permission to leave, and at its first call rushed out as if unaware that it would not yet be daylight for some time. Still a child, the princess kept her women close beside her. One of them saw him out through a corner door. The snow caught the first traces of dawn, though the garden was still dark. "The darkness of the spring nights,"[352] whispered her nurse, catching the scent he had left behind.

The patches of snow were almost indistinguishable from the white garden sands. "There is yet snow by the castle wall,"[353] he whispered to himself as he came to Murasaki's wing of the house and tapped on a shutter. No longer in the habit of accommodating themselves to nocturnal wanderings, the women let him wait for a time.

"How slow you are," he said, slipping in beside her. "I am quite congealed, as much from terror as from cold. And I have done nothing to deserve it."

He thought her rather wonderful. She did nothing at all, and yet, hiding her wet sleeves, she somehow managed to keep him at a distance. Not even among ladies of the highest birth was there anyone quite like her. He found himself comparing her with the little princess he had just left.

He spent the day beside her, going over their years together, and charging her with evasion and deviousness.

He sent a note saying that he would not be calling on the princess that day. "I seem to have caught a chill from the snow and think I would be more comfortable here."

Her nurse sent back tartly by word of mouth that the note had been passed on to her lady. Not a very amiable sort, thought Genji.

He did not want the Suzaku emperor to know of his want of ardor, but he did not seem capable even of maintaining appearances. Things could scarcely have been worse. For her part, Murasaki feared that the Suzaku emperor would hold her responsible.

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352. Oshikōchi no Mitsune, *Kokinshū*, no. 41: "The darkness of the spring nights may hide their colors, but can the scent of the plum blossoms be hidden too?"

353. *Bo Juyi's Collected Works*, book 16, "Gazing at Dawn from Yu Tower."

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Waking this time in the familiar rooms, he got off another note to the princess. He took great trouble with it, though he was not sure that she would notice. He chose white paper and attached it to a sprig of plum blossom.

> "Not heavy enough to block the way between us,
> the flurries of snow this morning yet distress me."

He told the messenger that the note was to be delivered at the west gallery.[354] . . .

An answer did presently come. It was on red tissue paper and folded neatly in an envelope. He opened it with trepidation, hoping that it would not be too irredeemably childish. He did not want to have secrets from Murasaki, and yet he did not want her to see the princess's hand, at least for a time. To display the princess in all her immaturity seemed somehow insulting. But it would be worse to make Murasaki yet unhappier. She sat leaning against an armrest. He laid the note half open beside her.

> "You do not come. I fain would disappear,
> a veil of snow upon the rough spring winds."

It was every bit as bad as he had feared, scarcely even a child's hand—and of course in point of years she was not a child at all. Murasaki glanced at it and glanced away as if she had not seen it. He would have offered it up for what it was, evidence of almost complete uselessness, had it been from anyone else.

"So you see you have nothing to worry about," he said.

He paid his first daytime call upon the princess. He had dressed with unusual care and no doubt his good looks had an unusually powerful effect on women not used to them. For the older and more experienced of them, the nurse, for instance, the effect was of something like apprehension. He was so splendid that they feared complications. Their lady was such a pretty little child of a thing, reduced to almost nothing at all by the brilliance of her surroundings. It was as if there were no flesh holding up the great mounds of clothing. She did not seem shy before him, and if it could have been said that her openness and freedom from mannerism were for purposes of putting him at ease, then it could also have been said that they succeeded very well. Her father was not generally held to be a virile sort of man, but no one denied his superior taste and refinement, and the mystery was that he had done so little by way of training her. And of course Genji, like everyone else, knew that she was his favorite, and that he worried endlessly about her. It all seemed rather sad. The other side of

354. His reasons are not clear. There is a theory that he does not want Murasaki to see, but it is not very tenable.

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the matter was that she did undeniably have a certain girlish charm. She listened quietly and answered with whatever came into her mind. He must be good to her. In his younger days his disappointment would have approached contempt, but he had become more tolerant. They all had their ways, and none was enormously superior to the others. There were as many sorts of women as there were women. A disinterested observer would probably have told him that he had made a good match for himself. Murasaki was the only remarkable one among them all, more remarkable now than ever, he thought, and he had known her very well for a very long time. He had no cause for dissatisfaction with his efforts as guardian and mentor. A single morning or evening away from her and the sense of deprivation was so intense as to bring a sort of foreboding. . . .

A frequenter of the Suzaku Palace, Kashiwagi had known all about the Third Princess and the Suzaku emperor's worries. He had offered himself as a candidate for her hand. His candidacy had not been dismissed, and then, suddenly and to his very great disappointment, she had gone to Genji. He still could not reconcile himself to what had happened. He seems to have taken some comfort in exchanging reports with women whom he had known in her maiden days. He of course heard what everyone else heard, that she was no great competitor for Genji's affection.

On a pleasant day in the Third Month, a number of young men assemble at Rokujō and engage in a game of kickball (kemari) *while Genji looks on.*

Taking their places under a fine cherry in full bloom, Yūgiri and Kashiwagi were very handsome in the evening light. Genji's less than genteel sport—such things do happen—took on something of the elegance of the company and the place. Spring mists enfolded trees in various stages of bud and bloom and new leaf. The least subtle of games does have its skills and techniques, and each of the players was determined to show what he could do. Though Kashiwagi played only briefly, he was clearly the best of them all. He was handsome but retiring, intense and at the same time lively and expansive. Though the players were now under the cherry directly before the south stairs, they had no eye for the blossoms. Genji and Prince Hotaru were at a corner of the veranda.

Yes, there were many skills, and as one inning followed another a certain abandon was to be observed and caps of state were pushed rather far back on noble foreheads. Yūgiri could permit himself a special measure of abandon, and his youthful spirits and vigor were infectious. He had on a soft white robe lined with red. His trousers were gently taken in at the ankles, but by no means untidy. He seemed very much in control of himself despite the abandon, and cherry petals fell about him like a flurry of snow. He broke off a twig from a dipping branch and went to sit on the stairs.

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"How quick they are to fall," said Kashiwagi, coming up behind him. "We much teach the wind to blow wide and clear."[355]

He glanced over toward the Third Princess's rooms. They seemed to be in the usual clutter. The multicolored sleeves pouring from under the blinds and through openings between them were like an assortment of swatches to be presented to the goddess of spring. Only a few paces from him a woman had pushed her curtains carelessly aside and looked as if she might be in a mood to receive a gentleman's addresses. A Chinese cat, very small and pretty, came running out with a larger cat in pursuit. There was a noisy rustling of silk as several women pushed forward to catch it. On a long cord which had become badly tangled, it would not yet seem to have been fully tamed. As it sought to free itself the cord caught in a curtain, which was pulled back to reveal the women behind. No one, not even those nearest the veranda, seemed to notice. They were much too worried about the cat.

A lady in informal dress stood[356] just inside the curtains beyond the second pillar to the west. Her robe seemed to be of red lined with lavender, and at the sleeves and throat the colors were as bright and varied as a book of paper samples. Her cloak was of white figured satin lined with red. Her hair fell as cleanly as sheaves of thread and fanned out toward the neatly trimmed edges some ten inches beyond her feet. In the rich billowing of her skirts the lady scarcely seemed present at all. The white profile framed by masses of black hair was pretty and elegant—though unfortunately the room was dark and he could not see her as well in the evening light as he would have wished. The women had been too delighted with the game, young gentlemen heedless of how they scattered the blossoms, to worry about blinds and concealment. The lady turned to look at the cat, which was mewing piteously, and in her face and figure was an abundance of quiet, unpretending young charm.

Yūgiri saw and strongly disapproved, but would only have made matters worse by stepping forward to lower the blind. He coughed warningly. The lady slipped out of sight. He too would have liked to see more, and he sighed when, the cat at length disengaged, the blind fell back into place. Kashiwagi's regrets were more intense. It could only have been the Third Princess, the lady who was separated from the rest of the company by her informal dress. He pretended that nothing had happened, but Yūgiri knew that he had seen the princess, and was embarrassed for her. Seeking to calm himself, Kashiwagi called the cat and took it up in his arms. It was delicately perfumed. Mewing prettily, it brought the image of the Third Princess back to him (for he had been ready to fall in love). . . .

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355. Fujiwara no Yoshikaze, *Kokinshū*, no. 85: "Blow wide and clear, spring wind, of the cherry blossoms. Let us see if they will fall of their own accord."

356. Well-behaved ladies did not permit themselves to be seen standing.

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New Herbs: Part Two

. . . The royal cat had had a large litter of kittens, which had been put out here and there. One of them, a very pretty little creature, was scampering about the crown prince's rooms. Kashiwagi was of course reminded of the Rokujō cat.

"The Third Princess has a really fine cat. You would have to go a very long way to find its rival. I only had the briefest glimpse, but it made a deep impression on me."

Very fond of cats, the crown prince asked for all the details. Kashiwagi perhaps made the Rokujō cat seem more desirable than it was.

"It is a Chinese cat, and Chinese cats are different. All cats have very much the same disposition, I suppose, but it does seem a little more affectionate than most. A perfectly charming little thing."

The crown prince made overtures through the Akashi princess and presently the cat was delivered. Everyone was agreed that it was a very superior cat. Guessing that the crown prince meant to keep it, Kashiwagi waited a few days and paid a visit. He had been a favorite of the Suzaku emperor's and now he was close to the crown prince, to whom he gave lessons on the koto and other instruments.

"Such numbers of cats as you do seem to have. Where is my own special favorite?"

The Chinese cat was apprehended and brought in. He took it in his arms.

"Yes, it is a handsome beast," said the crown prince, "but it does not seem terribly friendly. Maybe it is not used to us. Do you really think it so superior to our own cats?"

"Cats do not on the whole distinguish among people, though perhaps the more intelligent ones do have the beginnings of a rational faculty. But just look at them all, such swarms of cats and all of them such fine ones. Might I have the loan of it for a few days?"

He was afraid that he was being rather silly. But he had his cat. He kept it with him at night, and in the morning would see to its toilet and pet it and feed it. Once the initial shyness had passed it proved to be a most affectionate animal. He loved its way of sporting with the hem of his robe or entwining itself around a leg. Sometimes when he was sitting at the veranda lost in thought it would come up and speak to him.

"What an insistent little beast you are." He smiled and stroked its back. "You are here to remind me of someone I long for, and what is it you long for yourself? We must have been together in an earlier life, you and I."

He looked into its eyes and it returned the gaze and mewed more emphatically. Taking it in his arms, he resumed his sad thoughts.

"Now why should a cat all of a sudden dominate his life?" said one of the women. "He never paid much attention to cats before."

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The crown prince asked to have the cat back, but in vain. It had become Kashiwagi's constant and principal companion.

Several years pass. The Akashi princess has since given birth to several children, one of whom will be the next crown prince. Although Murasaki and Genji remain happily married, she has begun asking him to allow her to become a nun, but he refuses.

Murasaki was now busy being grandmother to the royal children. She did nothing that might have left her open to charges of bad judgment. Hers was a perfection, indeed, that was somehow ominous. It aroused forebodings. The evidence is that such people are not meant to have long lives. Genji had known many women and he knew what a rarity she was. She was thirty-seven this year.[357]

He was thinking over the years they had been together. "You must be especially careful this year. You must overlook none of the prayers and services. I am very busy and sometimes careless, and I must rely on you to keep track of things. If there is something that calls for special arrangements I can give the orders. It is a pity that your uncle, the bishop, is no longer living. He was the one who really knew about these things.

"I have always been rather spoiled and there can be few precedents for the honors I enjoy. The other side of the story is that I have had more than my share of sorrow. The people who have been fond of me have left me behind one after another, and there have been events in more recent years that I think almost anyone would call very sad. As for nagging little worries, it almost seems as if I were a collector of them. I sometimes wonder if it might be by way of compensation that I have lived a longer life than I would have expected to. You, on the other hand—I think that except for our years apart you have been spared real worries. There are the troubles that go with the glory of being an empress or one of His Majesty's other ladies. They are always being hurt by the proud people they must be with and they are engaged in a competition that makes a terrible demand on their nerves. You have lived the life of a cloistered maiden, and there is none more comfortable and secure. It is as if you had never left your parents. Have you been aware, my dear, that you have been luckier than most? I know that it has not been easy for you to have the princess move in on us all of a sudden. We sometimes do not notice the things that are nearest to us, and you may not have noticed that her presence has made me fonder of you. But you are quick to see these things, and perhaps I do you an injustice."

"You are right, of course. I do not much matter, and it must seem to most people that I have been more fortunate than I deserve. And that my unhappiness

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357. She should be thirty-nine or forty. The thirty-seventh year by the Japanese count was thought to be a dangerous one. It was then that Fujitsubo died.

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should sometimes have seemed almost too much for me—perhaps that is the prayer that has sustained me." She seemed to be debating whether to go on. He thought her splendid. "I doubt that I have much longer to live. Indeed, I have my doubts about getting through this year if I pretend that no changes are needed. It would make me very happy if you would let me do what I have so long wanted to do."

"Quite out of the question. Do you think I could go on without you? Not very much has happened these last years, I suppose, but knowing that you are here has been the most important thing. You must see to the end how very much I have loved you."

It was the usual thing, all over again.

A very little more and she would be in tears, he could see. He changed the subject.

"I have not known enormous numbers of women, but I have concluded that they all have their good points, and that the genuinely calm and equable ones are very rare indeed.

"There was Yūgiri's mother. I was a mere boy when we were married and she was one of the eminences in my life, someone I could not think of dismissing. But things never went well. To the end she seemed very remote. It was sad for her, but I cannot convince myself that the fault was entirely mine. She was an earnest lady with no faults that one would have wished to single out, but it might be said that she was the cold intellectual, the sort you might turn to for advice and find yourself uncomfortable with.

"There was the Rokujō lady, Akikonomu's mother. I remember her most of all for her extraordinary subtlety and cultivation, but she was a difficult lady too, indeed almost impossible to be with. Even when her anger seemed justified it lasted too long, and her jealousy was more than a man could be asked to endure. The tensions went on with no relief, and the reservations on both sides made easy companionship quite impossible. I stood too much on my dignity, I suppose. I thought that if I gave in she would gloat and exult. And so it ended. I could see how the gossip hurt her and how she condemned herself for conduct which she thought unworthy of her position, and I could see that difficult though she might be I was at fault myself. It is because I have so regretted what finally happened that I have gone to such trouble for her daughter. I do not claim all the credit, of course. It is obvious that she was meant all along for important things. But I made enemies for myself because of what I did for her, and I like to think that her mother, wherever she is, has forgiven me. I have on the impulse of the moment done many things I have come to regret. It was true long ago and it is true now." By fits and starts, he spoke of his several ladies.

"There is the Akashi lady. I looked down upon her and thought her no more than a plaything. But she has depths. She may seem docile and uncomplicated, but there is a firm core underneath it all. She is not easily slighted."

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"I was not introduced to the other ladies and can say nothing about them," replied Murasaki. "I cannot pretend to know very much about the Akashi lady either, but I have had a glimpse of her from time to time, and would agree with you that she has very great pride and dignity. I often wonder if she does not think me a bit of a simpleton. As for your daughter, I should imagine that she forgives me my faults."

It was affection for the Akashi princess, thought Genji, that had made such good friends of Murasaki and a lady she had once so resented. Yes, she was splendid indeed.

"You may have your little blank spots," he said, "but on the whole you manage things as the people and the circumstances demand. I have as I have said known numbers of ladies and not one of them has been quite like you. Not"—he smiled—"that you always keep your feelings to yourself."

In the evening he went off to the main hall. "I must commend the princess for having carried out her instructions so faithfully."

Immersed in her music, she was as youthful as ever. It did not seem to occur to her that anyone might be less than happy with her presence.

"Let me have a few days off," said Genji, "and you take a few off too. You have quite satisfied your teacher. You worked hard and the results were worthy of the effort. I have no doubts now about your qualifications." He pushed the koto aside and lay down.

As always when he was away, Murasaki had her women read stories to her. In the old stories that were supposed to tell what went on in the world, there were men with amorous ways and women who had affairs with them, but it seemed to be the rule that in the end the man settled down with one woman. Why should Murasaki herself live in such uncertainty? No doubt, as Genji had said, she had been unusually fortunate. But were the ache and the scarcely endurable sense of deprivation to be with her to the end? She had much to think about and went to bed very late, and toward daylight she was seized with violent chest pains. Her women were immediately at her side. Should they call Genji? Quite out of the question, she replied. Presently it was daylight. She was running a high fever and still in very great pain. No one had gone for Genji. Then a message came from the Akashi princess and she was informed of Murasaki's illness, and in great trepidation sent word to Genji. He immediately returned to Murasaki's wing of the house, to find her still in great pain.

"And what would seem to be the matter?" He felt her forehead. It was flaming hot.

He was in terror, remembering that only the day before he had warned her of the dangerous year ahead. Breakfast was brought but he sent it back. He was at her side all that day, seeing to her needs. She was unable to sit up and refused even the smallest morsel of fruit.

The days went by. All manner of prayers and services were commissioned. Priests were summoned to perform esoteric rites. Though the pain was constant,

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it would at times be of a vague and generalized sort, and then, almost unbearable, the chest pains would return. An endless list of abstinences was drawn up by the soothsayers, but it did no good. Beside her all the while, Genji was in anguish, looking for the smallest hopeful sign, the barely perceptible change that can brighten the prospects in even the most serious illness. She occupied the whole of his attention. Preparations for the visit to the Suzaku emperor, who sent frequent and courteous inquiries, had been put aside.

The Second Month was over and there was no improvement. Thinking that a change of air might help, Genji moved her to his Nijō mansion. Anxious crowds gathered there and the confusion was enormous. The Reizei emperor was much troubled and Yūgiri even more so. There were others who were in very great disquiet. Were Murasaki to die, then Genji would almost certainly follow through with his wish to retire from the world. Yūgiri saw to the usual sort of prayers and rites, of course, and extraordinary ones as well.

"Do you remember what I asked for?" Murasaki would say when she was feeling a little more herself. "May I not have it even now?"

"I have longed for many years to do exactly that," Genji would reply, thinking that to see her even briefly in nun's habit would be as painful as to know that the final time had come. "I have been held back by the thought of what it would mean to you if I were to insist on having my way. Can you now think of deserting me?"

But it did indeed seem that the end might be near. There were repeated crises, each of which could have been the last. Genji no longer saw the Third Princess. Music had lost all interest and koto and flute were put away. Most of the Rokujō household moved to Nijō. At Rokujō, where only women remained, it was as if the fires had gone out. One saw how much of the old life had depended on a single lady.

The Akashi princess was at Genji's side.

"But whatever I have might take advantage of your condition," said Murasaki, weak though she was. "Please go back immediately."

The princess's little children were with them, the prettiest children imaginable. Murasaki looked at them and wept. "I doubt that I shall be here to see you grow up. I suppose you will forget all about me."

The princess too was weeping.

"You must not even think of it," said Genji. "Everything will be all right if only we manage to think so. When we take the broad, easy view we are happy. It may be the destiny of the meaner sort to rise to the top, but the fretful and demanding ones do not stay there very long. It is the calm ones who survive. I could give you any number of instances."

He described her virtues to all the native and foreign gods and told them how very little she had to atone for. The venerable sages entrusted with the grander services and the priests in immediate attendance as well, including the ones on night duty, were sorry that they seemed to be accomplishing so little.

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They turned to their endeavors with new vigor and intensity. For five and six days there would be some improvement and then she would be worse again, and so time passed. How would it all end? The malign force that had taken possession of her refused to come forth. She was wasting away from one could not have said precisely what ailment, and there was no relief from the worry and sorrow.

I have been neglecting Kashiwagi. Now a councillor of the middle rank, he enjoyed the special confidence of the emperor and was one of the more promising young officials of the day. But fame and honor had done nothing to satisfy the old longing. He took for his bride the Second Princess, daughter of the Suzaku emperor by a low-ranking concubine. It must be admitted that he thought her less than the very best he could have found. She was an agreeable lady whose endowments were far above the ordinary, but she was not capable of driving the Third Princess from his thoughts. He did not, to be sure, treat her like one of the old women who are cast out on mountainsides to die, but he was not as attentive as he might have been.

The Kojijū[358] to whom he went with the secret passion he was unable to quell was a daughter of Jijū, the Third Princess's nurse. Jijū's elder sister was Kashiwagi's own nurse, and so he had long known a great deal about the princess. He had known when she was still a child that she was very pretty and that she was her father's favorite. It was from these early beginnings that his love had grown.

Guessing that the Rokujō mansion would be almost deserted, he called Kojijū and warmly pleaded his case. "My feelings could destroy me, I fear. You are my tie with her and so I have asked you about her and hoped that you might let her know something of my uncontrollable longing. You have been my hope and you have done nothing. Someone was saying to her royal father that Genji had many ladies to occupy his attention and that one of them seemed to have monopolized it, and the Third Princess was spending lonely nights and days of boredom. It would seem that her father might have been having second thoughts. If his daughters had to marry commoners, he said, it would be nice if they were commoners who had a little time for them. Someone told me that he might even think the Second Princess the more fortunate of the two. She is the one who has long years of comfort and security ahead of her. I cannot tell you how it all upsets me." He sighed. "They are daughters of the same royal father, but the one is the one and the other is the other."

"I think, sir, that you might be a little more aware of your place in the world. You have one princess and you want another? Your greed seems boundless."

He smiled. "Yes, I suppose so. But her father gave me some encouragement and so did her brother. Though it may be, as you say, that I am not as aware of

358. One of the Third Princess's attendants, through whom Kashiwagi has in the past had messages delivered to the princess.

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my place in the world as I should be, I have let myself think of her. Both of them found occasion to say that they did not consider me so very objectionable. You are the one who is at fault—you should have worked just a little harder."

"It was impossible. I have been told that there is such a thing as fate. It may have been fate which made Genji ask for her so earnestly and ceremoniously. Do you really think His Majesty's affection for you such that, had you made similar overtures, they would have prevailed over His Lordship's? It is true that you have a little more dignity and prestige now than you had then."

He did not propose to answer this somewhat intemperate outburst. "Let us leave the past out of the matter. The present offers a rare opportunity. There are very few people around her and you can, if you will, contrive to admit me to her presence and let me tell her just a little of what has been on my mind. As for the possibility of my doing anything improper—look at me, if you will, please. Do I seem capable of anything of the sort?"

"This is preposterous, utterly preposterous. The very thought of it terrifies me. Why did I even come?"

"Not entirely preposterous, I think. Marriage is an uncertain arrangement. Are you saying that these things never under any circumstances happen to His Majesty's own ladies? I should think that the chances might be more considerable with someone like the princess. On the surface everything may seem to be going beautifully, but I should imagine that she has her share of private dissatisfactions. She was her father's favorite and now she is losing out to ladies of no very high standing. I know everything. It is an uncertain world we live in and no one can legislate to have things exactly as he wants them."

"You are not telling me, are you, that she is losing out to others and so she must make fine new arrangements for herself? The arrangements she has already made for herself are rather fine, I should think, and of a rather special nature. Her royal father would seem to have thought that with His Lordship to look after her as if she were his daughter she would have no worries. I should imagine that they have both of them accepted the relationship for what it is. Do you think it is quite your place to suggest changes?"

He must not let her go away angry. "You may be sure that I am aware of my own inadequacy and would not dream of exposing myself to the critical eye of a lady who is used to the incomparable Genji. But it would not be such a dreadful thing, I should think, to approach her curtains and speak with her very briefly? It is not considered such a great sin, I believe, for a person to speak the whole truth to the powers above."

He seemed prepared to swear by all the powers, and she was young and somewhat heedless, and when a man spoke as if he were prepared to throw his life away she could not resist forever.

"I will see what I can do if I find what seems the right moment. On nights when His Lordship does not come the princess has swarms of women in her room, and always several of her favorites right beside her, and I cannot imagine what sort of moment it will be."

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Frowning, she left him.

He was after her constantly. The moment finally came, it seemed, and she got off a note to him. He set out in careful disguise, delighted but in great trepidation. It did not occur to him that a visit might only add to his torments. He wanted to see a little more of her whose sleeves he had glimpsed that spring evening. If he were to tell her what was in his heart, she might pity him, she might even answer him briefly.

It was about the middle of the Fourth Month, the eve of the lustration for the Kamo festival. Twelve women from the Third Princess's household were to be with the high priestess, and girls and young women of no very high rank who were going to watch the procession were busy at their needles and otherwise getting ready. No one had much time for the princess. Azechi, one of her most trusted intimates, had been summoned by the Minamoto captain with whom she was keeping company and had gone back to her room. Only Kojijū was with the princess. Sensing that the time was right, she led him to a seat in an east corner of the princess's boudoir. And was that not a little extreme?

The princess had gone serenely off to bed. She sensed that a man was in her room and thought that it would be Genji. But he seemed rather too polite—and then suddenly he put his arms around her and took her from her bed. She was terrified. Had some evil power seized her? She forced herself to look up and saw that it was a stranger. And here he was babbling complete nonsense. She called for her women, but no one came. She was trembling and bathed in perspiration. Though he could not help feeling sorry for her, he thought this agitation rather charming.

"I know that I am nothing, but I would not have expected quite such unfriendliness. I once had ambitions that were perhaps too grand for me. I could have kept them buried in my heart, I suppose, eventually to die there, but I spoke to someone of a small part of them and they came to your father's attention. I took courage from the fact that he did not seem to consider them entirely beneath his notice, and I told myself that the regret would be worse than anything if a love unique for its depth and intensity should come to nothing, and my low rank and only that must be held responsible. It was a very deep love indeed, and the sense of regret, the injury, the fear, the yearning, have only grown stronger as time has gone by. I know that I am being reckless and I am very much ashamed of myself that I cannot control my feelings and must reveal myself to you as someone who does not know his proper place. But I vow to you that I shall do nothing more. You will have no worse crimes to charge me with."

She finally guessed who he was, and was appalled. She was speechless.

"I know how you must feel; but it is not as if this sort of thing had never happened before. Your coldness is what has no precedent. It could drive me to extremes. Tell me that you pity me and that will be enough. I will leave you."

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He had expected a proud lady whom it would not be easy to talk to. He would tell her a little of his unhappiness, he had thought, and say nothing he might later regret. But he found her very different. She was pretty and gentle and unresisting, and far more graceful and elegant, in a winsome way, than most ladies he had known. His passion was suddenly more than he could control. Was there no hiding place to which they might run off together?

He presently dozed off (it cannot be said that he fell asleep) and dreamed of the cat of which he had been so fond. It came up to him mewing prettily. He seemed to be dreaming that he had brought it back to the princess. As he awoke he was asking himself why he should have done that. And what might the dream have meant?

The princess was still in a state of shock. She could not believe that it had all happened.

"You must tell yourself that there were ties between us which we could not escape. I am in as much of a daze as you can possibly be."

He told her of the surprising event that spring evening, of the cat and the cord and the raised blind. So it had actually happened! Sinister forces seemed to preside over her affairs. And how could she face Genji? She wept like a little child and he looked on with respectful pity. Brushing away her tears, he let them mingle with his own.

There were traces of dawn in the sky. He felt that he had nowhere to go and that it might have been better had he not come at all. "What am I to do? You seem to dislike me most extravagantly, and I find it hard to think of anything more to say. And I have not even heard your voice."

He was only making things worse. Her thoughts in a turmoil, she was quite unable to speak.

"This muteness is almost frightening. Could anything be more awful? I can see no reason for going on. Let me die. Life has seemed to have some point and so I have lived, and even now it is not easy to think that I am at the end of it. Grant me some small favor, some gesture, anything at all, and I will not mind dying."

He took her in his arms and carried her out. She was terrified. What could he possibly mean to do with her? He spread a screen in a corner room and opened the door beyond. The south door of the gallery, through which he had come the evening before, was still open. It was very dark. Wanting to see her face, even dimly, he pushed open a shutter.

"This cruelty is driving me mad. If you wish to still the madness, then say that you pity me."

She did want to say something. She wanted to say that his conduct was outrageous. But she was trembling like a frightened child. It was growing lighter.

"I would like to tell you of a rather startling dream I had, but I suppose you would not listen. You seem to dislike me very much indeed. But I think it might perhaps mean something to you."

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The dawn sky seemed sadder than the saddest autumn sky.

> "I arise and go forth in the dark before the dawn.
> I know not where, nor whence came the dew on my sleeve."

He showed her a moist sleeve.

He finally seemed to be leaving. So great was her relief that she managed an answer:

> "Would I might fade away in the sky of dawn,
> and all of it might vanish as a dream."

She spoke in a tiny, wavering voice and she was like a beautiful child. He hurried out as if he had only half heard, and felt as if he were leaving his soul behind.

He went quietly off to his father's house, preferring it to his own and the company of the Second Princess. He lay down but was unable to sleep. He did not know what if anything the dream had meant. He suddenly longed for the cat—and he was frightened. It was a terrible thing he had done. How could he face the world? He remained in seclusion and his secret wanderings seemed to be at an end. It was a terrible thing for the Third Princess, of course, and for himself as well. Supposing he had seduced the emperor's own lady and the deed had come to light—could the punishment be worse? Even if he were to avoid specific punishment he did not know how he could face a reproachful Genji.

There are wellborn ladies of strongly amorous tendencies whose dignity and formal bearing are a surface that falls away when the right man comes with the right overtures. With the Third Princess it was a matter of uncertainty and a want of firm principles. She was a timid girl and she felt as vulnerable as if one of her women had already broadcast her secret to the world. She could not face the sun. She wanted to brood in darkness.

She said that she was unwell. The report was passed on to Genji, who came hurrying over. He had thought that he already had worries enough. There was nothing emphatically wrong with her, it would seem, but she refused to look at him. Fearing that she was out of sorts because of his long absence, he told her about Murasaki's illness.

"It may be the end. At this time of all times I would not want her to think me unfeeling. She has been with me since she was a child and I cannot abandon her now. I am afraid I have not had time these last months for anyone else. It will not go on forever, and I know that you will presently understand."

She was ashamed and sorry. When she was alone she wept a great deal.

For Kashiwagi matters were worse. The conviction grew that it would have been better not to see her. Night and day he could only lament his impossible

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love. A group of young friends, in a hurry to be off to the Kamo festival, urged him to go with them, but he pleaded illness and spent the day by himself. Though correct in his behavior toward the Second Princess, he was not really fond of her. He passed the tedious hours in his own rooms. The little girl came in with a sprig of *aoi*, the heartvine of the Kamo festival.

> "In secret, without leave, she brings this heartvine.
> A most lamentable thing, a blasphemous thing."

He could think only of the Third Princess. He heard the festive roar in the distance as if it were no part of his life and passed a troubled day in a tedium of his own making.

The Second Princess was used to these low spirits. She did not know what might be responsible for them, but she felt unhappy and inadequate. She had almost no one with her, most of the women having gone off to the festival. In her gloom she played a sad, gentle strain on a koto. Yes, she was very beautiful, very delicate and refined; but had the choice been his he would have taken her sister. He had not, of course, been fated to make the choice.

> "Laurel branches twain, so near and like.
> Why was it that I took the fallen leaf?"[359]

It was a poem he jotted down to while away the time—and not very complimentary to the Second Princess.

Though Genji was in a fever of impatience to be back at Nijō, he so seldom visited Rokujō that it would be bad manners to leave immediately.

A messenger came. "Our lady has expired."

He rushed off. The road was dark before his eyes, and ever darker. At Nijō the crowds overflowed into the streets. There was weeping within. The worst did indeed seem to have happened. He pushed his way desperately through.

"She had seemed better these last few days," said one of the women, "and now this."

The confusion was enormous. The women were wailing and asking her to take them with her. The altars had been dismantled and the priests were leaving, only the ones nearest the family remaining behind. For Genji it was like the end of the world.

He set about quieting the women. "Some evil power has made it seem that she is dead. Nothing more. Certainly this commotion does not seem called for."

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359. The Second Princess is often called Ochiba, or Fallen Leaf. The appellation comes from this poem.

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He made vows more solemn and detailed than before and summoned ascetics known to have worked wonders.

"Even if her time has come and she must leave us," they said, "let her stay just a little longer. There was the vow of the blessed Fudō.[360] Let her stay even that much longer."

So intense and fevered were their efforts that clouds of black smoke seemed to coil over their heads.

Genji longed to look into her eyes once more. It had been too sudden, he had not even been allowed to say goodbye. There seemed a possibility—one can only imagine the dread which it inspired—that he too was on the verge of death.

Perhaps the powers above took note. The malign spirit suddenly yielded after so many tenacious weeks and passed from Murasaki to the little girl who was serving as medium, and who now commenced to thresh and writhe and moan. To Genji's joy and terror Murasaki was breathing once more.

The medium was now weeping and flinging her hair madly about. "Go away, all of you. I want a word with Lord Genji and it must be with him alone. All these prayers and chants all these months have been an unrelieved torment. I have wanted you to suffer as I have suffered. But then I saw that I had brought you to the point of death and I pitied you, and so I have come out into the open. I am no longer able to seem indifferent, though I am the wretch you see. It is precisely because the old feelings have not died that I have come to this. I had resolved to let myself be known to no one."

He had seen it before. The old terror and anguish came back. He took the little medium by the hand lest she do something violent.

"Is it really you? I have heard that foxes and other evil creatures sometimes go mad and seek to defame the dead. Tell me who you are, quite plainly. Or give me a sign, something that will be meaningless to others but unmistakable to me. Then I will try to believe you."

Weeping copiously and speaking in a loud wail, the medium seemed at the same time to cringe with embarrassment.

"I am horribly changed, and you pretend not to know me. You are the same. Oh dreadful, dreadful."

Even in these wild rantings there was a suggestion of the old aloofness. It added to the horror. He wanted to hear no more.

But there was more. "From up in the skies I saw what you did for my daughter and was pleased. But it seems to be a fact that the ways of the living are not the ways of the dead and that the feeling of mother for child is weakened. I have gone on thinking you the cruelest of men. I heard you tell your dear lady what

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360. Early commentaries say that Fudō (Skt. Acala) vowed to give six more months of life to those of the faithful who wished it, but the source in the writ is not known.

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a difficult and unpleasant person you once found me, and the resentment was worse than when you insulted me to my face and finally abandoned me. I am dead, and I hoped that you had forgiven me and would defend me against those who spoke ill of me and say that it was none of it true. The hope was what twisted a twisted creature more cruelly and brought this horror. I do not hate her; but the powers have shielded you and only let me hear your voice in the distance. Now this has happened. Pray for me. Pray that my sins be forgiven. These services, these holy texts, they are an unremitting torment, they are smoke and flames, and in the roar and crackle I cannot hear the holy word. Tell my child of my torments. Tell her that she is never to fall into rivalries with other ladies, never to be a victim of jealousy. Her whole attention must go to atoning for the sins of her time at Ise, far from the Good Law. I am sorry for everything."

It was not a dialogue which he wished to pursue. He had the little medium taken away and Murasaki quietly moved to another room.

The crowds swarming through the house seemed themselves to bode ill. All the high courtiers had been off watching the return procession from the Kamo Shrine and it was on their own way home that they heard the news.

"What a really awful thing," said someone, and there was no doubting the sincerity of the words. "A light that should for every reason have gone on shining has been put out, and we are left in a world of drizzling rain."

But someone else whispered: "It does not do to be too beautiful and virtuous. You do not live long. 'Nothing in this world would be their rival,' the poet said.[361] He was talking about cherry blossoms, of course, but it is so with her too. When such a lady lives to know all the pleasures and successes, her fellows must suffer. Maybe now the Third Princess will enjoy some of the attention that should have been hers all along. She has not had an easy time of it, poor thing."

Not wanting another such day, Kashiwagi had ridden off with several of his brothers to watch the return procession. The news of course came as a shock. They turned toward Nijō.

"Nothing is meant in this world to last forever,"[362] he whispered to himself. He went in as if inquiring after her health, for it had after all been only a rumor. The wailing and lamenting proclaimed that it must be true.

Prince Hyōbu had arrived and gone inside and was too stunned to receive him. A weeping Yūgiri came out.

"How is she? I heard these awful reports and was unable to believe them, though I had of course known of her illness."

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361. Anonymous, *Kokinshū*, no. 70: "If cherry blossoms waited at our command, nothing in this world would be their rival."

362. *The Tales of Ise*, sec. 82: "The cherry blossom is dearest when it falls. Nothing is meant in this world to last forever."

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"Yes, she has been very ill for a very long time. This morning at dawn she stopped breathing. But it seems to have been a possession. I am told that although she has revived and everyone is enormously relieved the crisis has not yet passed. We are still very worried."

His eyes were red and swollen. It was his own unhappy love, perhaps, that made Kashiwagi look curiously at his friend, wondering why he should grieve so for a stepmother of whom he had not seen a great deal.

"She was dangerously ill," Genji sent out to the crowds. "This morning quite suddenly it appeared that she had breathed her last. The shock, I fear, was such that we were all quite deranged and given over to loud and unbecoming grief. I have not myself been as calm and in control of things as I ought to have been. I will thank you properly at another time for having been so good as to call."

It would not have been possible for Kashiwagi to visit Rokujō except in such a crisis. He was in acute discomfort even so—evidence, no doubt, of a very bad conscience.

Genji was more worried than before. He commissioned numberless rites of very great dignity and grandeur. The Rokujō lady had done terrible things while she lived, and what she had now become was utterly horrible. He even felt uncomfortable about his relations with her daughter, the Reizei empress. The conclusion was inescapable: women were creatures of sin. He wanted to be done with them. He could not doubt that it was in fact the Rokujō lady who had addressed him. His remarks about her had been in an intimate conversation with Murasaki overheard by no one. Disaster still seemed imminent. He must do what he could to forestall it. Murasaki had so earnestly pleaded to become a nun. He thought that tentative vows might give her strength and so he permitted a token tonsure and ordered that the five injunctions be administered. There were noble and moving phrases in the sermon describing the admirable power of the injunctions. Weeping and hovering over Murasaki quite without regard for appearances, Genji too invoked the holy name. There are crises that can unsettle the most superior of men. He wanted only to save her, to have her still beside him, whatever the difficulties and sacrifices. The sleepless nights had left him dazed and emaciated.

Murasaki was better, but still in pain through the Fourth Month. It was now the rainy Fifth Month, when the skies are their most capricious. Genji commissioned a reading of the Lotus Sutra in daily installments and other solemn services as well toward freeing the Rokujō lady of her sins. At Murasaki's bedside there were continuous readings by priests of good voice. From time to time the Rokujō lady would make dolorous utterances through the medium, but she refused all requests that she go away.

Murasaki was troubled with a shortness of breath and seemed even weaker as the warm weather came on. Genji was in such a state of distraction that Murasaki, ill though she was, sought to comfort him. She would have no regrets if she were to die, but she did not want it to seem that she did not care. She

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forced herself to take broth and a little food and from the Sixth Month she was able to sit up. Genji was delighted but still very worried. He stayed with her at Nijō.

The Third Princess had been unwell since that shocking visitation. There were no specific complaints or striking symptoms. She felt vaguely indisposed and that was all. She had eaten very little for some weeks and was pale and thin. Unable to contain himself, Kashiwagi would sometimes come for visits as fleeting as dreams. She did not welcome them. She was so much in awe of Genji that to rank the younger man beside him seemed almost blasphemous. Kashiwagi was an amiable and personable young man, and people who were no more than friends were quite right to think him superior; but she had known the incomparable Genji since she was a child and Kashiwagi scarcely seemed worth a glance. She thought herself very badly treated indeed that he should be the one to make her unhappy. Her nurse and a few others knew the nature of her indisposition and grumbled that Genji's visits were so extremely infrequent. He did finally come to inquire after her.

It was very warm. Murasaki had had her hair washed and otherwise sought renewal. Since she was in bed with her hair spread about her, it was not quick to dry. It was smooth and without a suggestion of a tangle to the farthest ends. Her skin was lovely, so white that it almost seemed iridescent, as if a light were shining through. She was very beautiful and as fragile as the shell of a locust.

The Nijō mansion had been neglected and was somewhat run-down, and compared to the Rokujō mansion it seemed very cramped and narrow. Taking advantage of a few days when she was somewhat more herself, Genji sent gardeners to clear the brook and restore the flower beds, and the suddenly renewed expanse before her made Murasaki marvel that she should be witness to such things. The lake was very cool, a carpet of lotuses. The dew on the green of the pads was like a scattering of jewels.

"Just look, will you," said Genji. "As if it had a monopoly on coolness. I cannot tell you how pleased I am that you have improved so." She was sitting up and her pleasure in the scene was quite open. There were tears in his eyes. "I was almost afraid at times that I too might be dying."

Although he is not eager to do so, Genji takes advantage of a break in the rains to return to Rokujō to look in on the Third Princess, word of whose indisposition had come to him some time ago. He is surprised to learn from her women that she is pregnant.

Kojijū was frantic with worry.

Hearing that Genji was at Rokujō, Kashiwagi was a victim of a jealousy that might have seemed out of place. He wrote a long letter to the Third Princess describing his sorrows. Kojijū took advantage of a moment when Genji was in another part of the house to show her the letter.

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"Take it away. It makes me feel worse." She lay down and refused to look at it.

"But do just glance for a minute at the beginning here." Kojijū unfolded the letter. "It is very sad."

Someone was coming. She pulled the princess's curtains closed and went off.

It was Genji. In utter confusion, the princess had time only to push it under the edge of a quilt.

He would be going back to Rokujō that evening, said Genji. "You do not seem so very ill. The lady in the other house is very ill indeed and I would not want her to think I have deserted her. You are not to pay any attention to what they might be saying about me. You will presently see the truth."

So cheerful and even frolicsome at other times, she was subdued and refused to look at him. It must be that she thought he did not love her. He lay down beside her and as they talked it was evening. He was awakened from a nap by a clamor of evening cicadas.

"It will soon be dark," he said, getting up to change clothes.

"Can you not stay at least until you have the moon to guide you?"[363]

She seemed so very young. He thought her charming. At least until then—it was a very small request.

> "The voice of the evening cicada says you must leave.
> 'Be moist with evening dews,' you say to my sleeves?"

Something of the cheerful innocence of old seemed to come back. He sighed and knelt down beside her.

> "How do you think it sounds in yonder village,
> the cicada that summons me there and summons me here?"

He was indeed pulled in two directions. Finally deciding that it would be cruel to leave, he stayed the night. Murasaki continued to be very much on his mind. He went to bed after a light supper.

He was up early, thinking to be on his way while it was still cool.

"I left my fan somewhere. This one is not much good." He searched through her sitting room, where he had had his nap the day before.

He saw a corner of pale-green tissue paper at the edge of a slightly disarranged quilt. Casually he took it up. It was a note in a man's hand. Delicately perfumed, it somehow had the look of a rather significant document. There

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363. Oyakeme of Buzen, *Man'yōshū*, no. 709, with variations in other anthologies: "Dark the way and dangerous. Can you not stay at least until you have the moon to guide you?"

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were two sheets of paper covered with very small writing. The hand was without question Kashiwagi's.

The woman who opened the mirror for him paid little attention. It would of course be a letter he had every right to see. But Kojijū noted with horror that it was the same color as Kashiwagi's of the day before. She quite forgot about breakfast. It could not be. Nothing so awful could have been permitted to happen. Her lady absolutely must have hidden it.

The princess was still sleeping soundly. What a child she was, thought Genji, not without a certain contempt. Supposing someone else had found the letter. That was the thing: the heedlessness that had troubled him all along.

He had left and the other women were some distance away. "And what did you do with the young gentleman's letter?" asked Kojijū. "His Lordship was reading a letter that was very much the same color."

The princess collapsed in helpless weeping.

Kojijū was sorry for her, of course, but shocked and angry too. "Really, my lady—where did you put it? There were others around and I went off because I did not want him to think we were conspiring. That was how I felt. And you had time before he came in. Surely you hid it?"

"He came in on me while I was reading it. I didn't have time. I slipped it under something and forgot about it."

Speechless, Kojijū went to look for the letter. It was of course nowhere to be found.

"How perfectly, impossibly awful. The young gentleman was terrified of His Lordship, terrified that the smallest word might reach him. And now this has happened, and in no time at all. You are such a child, my lady. You let him see you, and he could not forget you however many years went by, and came begging to me. But that we should lose control of things so completely—it just did not seem possible. Nothing could be worse for either of you."

She did not mince words. The princess was too good-natured and still too much of a child to argue back. Her tears flowed on.

She quite lost her appetite. Her women thought Genji cruel and unfeeling. "She is so extremely unwell, and he ignores her. He gives all his attention to a lady who has quite recovered."

Genji was still puzzled. He read the letter over and over again. He tested the hypothesis that one of her women had deliberately set about imitating Kashiwagi's hand. But it would not do. The idiosyncrasies were all too clearly Kashiwagi's. He had to admire the style, the fluency and clear detail with which Kashiwagi had described the fortuitous consummation of all his hopes, and all his sufferings since. But Genji had felt contemptuous of the princess and he must feel contemptuous of her young friend too. A man simply did not set these matters down so clearly in writing. Kashiwagi was a man of discernment and some eminence, and he had written a letter that could easily embarrass a lady. Genji himself had in his younger years never forgotten that letters have a way

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of going astray. His own letters had always been laconic and evasive even when he had longed to make them otherwise. Caution had not always been easy.

And how was he to behave toward the princess? He understood rather better the reasons for her condition. He had come upon the truth himself, without the aid of informers. Was there to be no change in his manner? He would have preferred that there be none but feared that things could not be the same again. Even in affairs which he had not from the outset taken seriously, the smallest evidence that the lady might be interested in someone else had always been enough to kill his own interest; and here he had more, a good deal more. What an impertinent trifler the young man was! It was not unknown for a young man to seduce even one of His Majesty's own ladies, but this seemed different. A young man and lady might in the course of their duties in the royal service find themselves favorably disposed toward each other and do what they ought not to have done. Such things did happen. Royal ladies were, after all, human. Some of them were not perhaps as sober and careful as they might be and they made mistakes. The man would remain in the court service and unless there was a proper scandal the mistake might go undetected. But this—Genji snapped his fingers in irritation. He had paid more attention to the princess than the lady he really loved, the truly priceless treasure, and she had responded by choosing a man like Kashiwagi!

He thought that there could be no precedent for it. Life had its frustrations for His Majesty's ladies when they obediently did their duty. There might come words of endearment from an honest man and there might be times when silence seemed impossible, and in a lady's answers would be the start of a love affair. One did not condone her behavior but one could understand it. But Genji thought himself neither fatuous nor conceited in wondering how the Third Princess could possibly have divided her affections between him and a man like Kashiwagi.

Well, it was all very distasteful. But he would say nothing. He wondered if his own father had long ago known what was happening and said nothing. He could remember his own terror very well, and the memory told him that he was hardly the one to reprove others who strayed from the narrow path.

Despite his determined silence, Murasaki knew that something was wrong. She herself had quite recovered, and she feared that he was feeling guilty about the Third Princess.

"I really am very much better. They tell me that Her Highness is not well. You should have stayed with her a little longer."

"Her Highness—it is true that she is indisposed, but I cannot see that there is a great deal wrong with her. Messenger after messenger has come from court. I gather that there was one just today from her father. Her brother worries about her because her father worries about her, and I must worry about both of them."

"I would worry less about them than about the princess herself if I thought she was unhappy. She may not say very much, but I hate to think of all those women giving her ideas."

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Genji smiled and shrugged his shoulders. "You are the important one and you have no troublesome relatives, and you think of all these things. I think about her important brother and you think about her women. I fear I am not a very sensitive man." But of her suggestion that he return to Rokujō he said only: "There will be time when you are well enough to go with me."

"I would like to stay here just a little while longer. Do please go ahead and make her happy. I won't be long."

And so the days went by. The princess was of course in no position to charge him with neglect. She lived in dread lest her father get some word of what had happened.

Letter after passionate letter came from Kashiwagi. Finally, pushed too far, Kojijū told him everything. He was horrified. When had it happened? It had been as if the skies were watching him, so fearful had he been that something in the air might arouse Genji's suspicions. And now Genji had irrefutable evidence. It was a time of still, warm weather even at night and in the morning, but he felt as if a cold wind were cutting through him. Genji had singled him out for special favors and made him a friend and adviser, and for all this Kashiwagi had been most grateful. How could he now face Genji—who must think him an intolerable upstart and interloper! Yet if he were to avoid Rokujō completely people would notice and think it odd, and Genji would of course have stronger evidence than before. Sick with worry, Kashiwagi stopped going to court. It was not likely that he would face specific punishment, but he feared that he had ruined his life. Things could not be worse. He hated himself for what he had let happen.

Genji stops inviting Kashiwagi to functions at Rokujō for a time, but eventually it becomes unavoidable: although Genji is cordial and courteous, Kashiwagi is acutely uncomfortable. Tormented by guilt, and fearful of Genji's displeasure, the younger man falls ill.

The Oak Tree

The New Year came and Kashiwagi's condition had not improved. He knew how troubled his parents were and he knew that suicide was no solution, for he would be guilty of the grievous sin of having left them behind. He had no wish to live on. Since his very early years he had had high standards and ambitions and had striven in private matters and public to outdo his rivals by even a little. His wishes had once or twice been thwarted, however, and he had so lost confidence in himself that the world had come to seem unrelieved gloom. A longing to prepare for the next world had succeeded his ambitions, but the opposition of his parents had kept him from following the mendicant way through the mountains and over the moors. He had delayed, and time had gone by. Then had come events, and for them he had only himself to blame, which had made it impossible for him to show his face in public. He did not blame the gods. His own deeds were working themselves out. A man does not have

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the thousand years of the pine, and he wanted to go now, while there were still those who might mourn for him a little, and perhaps even a sigh from her would be the reward for his burning passion. To die now and perhaps win the forgiveness of the man who must feel so aggrieved would be far preferable to living on and bringing sorrow and dishonor upon the lady and upon himself. In his last moments everything must disappear. Perhaps, because he had no other sins to atone for, a part of the affection with which Genji had once honored him might return.

The same thoughts, over and over, ran uselessly through his mind. And why, he asked himself in growing despair, had he so deprived himself of alternatives? His pillow threatened to float away on the river of his woes.

He took advantage of a slight turn for the better, when his parents and the others had withdrawn from his bedside, to get off a letter to the Third Princess.

"You may have heard that I am near death. It is natural that you should not care very much, and yet I am sad." His hand was so uncertain that he gave up any thought of saying all that he would have wished to say.

> "My thoughts of you: will they stay when I am gone
> like smoke that lingers over the funeral pyre?

"One word of pity will quiet the turmoil and light the dark road I am taking by my own choice."

Unchastened, he wrote to Kojijū of his sufferings, at considerable length. He longed, he said, to see her lady one last time. She had from childhood been close to his house, in which she had near relatives. Although she had strongly disapproved of his designs upon a royal princess who should have been far beyond his reach, she was extremely sorry for him in what might be his last illness.

"Do answer him, please, my lady," she said, in tears. "You must, just this once. It may be your last chance."

"I am sorry for him, in a general sort of way. I am sorry for myself too. Any one of us could be dead tomorrow. But what happened was too awful. I cannot bear to think of it. I could not possibly write to him."

She was not by nature a very careful sort of lady, but the great man to whom she was married had terrorized her with hints, always guarded, that he was displeased with her.

Kojijū insisted and pushed an inkstone toward her, and finally, very hesitantly, she set down an answer which Kojijū delivered under cover of evening.

Tō no Chūjō had sent to Mount Katsuragi for an ascetic famous as a worker of cures, and the spells and incantations in which he immersed himself might almost have seemed overdone. Other holy men were recommended and Tō no Chūjō's sons would go off to seek in mountain recesses men scarcely known in the city. Mendicants quite devoid of grace came crowding into the house. The symptoms did not point to any specific illness, but Kashiwagi would sometimes weep in great, racking sobs. The soothsayers were agreed that a jealous woman

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had taken possession of him. They might possibly be right, thought Tō no Chūjō. But whoever she was she refused to withdraw, and so it was that the search for healers reached into these obscure corners. The ascetic from Katsuragi, an imposing man with cold, forbidding eyes, intoned mystic spells in a somewhat threatening voice.

"I cannot stand a moment more of it," said Kashiwagi. "I must have sinned grievously. These voices terrify me and seem to bring death even nearer."

Slipping from bed, he instructed the women to tell his father that he was asleep and went to talk with Kojijū. Tō no Chūjō and the ascetic were conferring in subdued tones. Tō no Chūjō was robust and youthful for his years and in ordinary times much given to laughter. He told the holy man how it had all begun and how a respite always seemed to be followed by a relapse.

"Do please make her go away, whoever she might be," he said entreatingly.

A hollow shell of his old self, Kashiwagi was meanwhile addressing Kojijū in a faltering voice sometimes interrupted by a suggestion of a laugh.

"Listen to them. They seem to have no notion that I might be ill because I misbehaved. If, as these wise men say, some angry lady has taken possession of me, then I would expect her presence to make me hate myself a little less. I can say that others have done much the same thing, made mistakes in their longing for ladies beyond their reach, and ruined their prospects. I can tell myself all this, but the torment goes on. I cannot face the world knowing that he knows. His radiance dazzles and blinds me. I would not have thought the misdeed so appalling, but since the evening when he set upon me I have so lost control of myself that it has been as if my soul were wandering loose. If it is still around the house somewhere, please lay a trap for it."[364]

She told him of the Third Princess, lost in sad thoughts and afraid of prying eyes. He could almost see the forlorn little figure. Did unhappy spirits indeed go wandering forth disembodied?

"I shall say no more of your lady. It has all passed as if it had never happened at all. Yet I would be very sorry indeed if it were to stand in the way of her salvation. I have only one wish left, to know that the consequences of the sad affair have been disposed of safely. I have my own interpretation of the dream I had that night and have had very great trouble keeping it to myself."

Kojijū was frightened at the inhuman tenacity which these thoughts suggested. Yet she had to feel sorry for him. She was weeping bitterly.

He sent for a lamp and read the princess's note. Though fragile and uncertain, the hand was interesting. "Your letter made me very sad, but I cannot see you. I can only think of you. You speak of the smoke that lingers on, and yet

> "I wish to go with you, that we may see
> whose smoldering thoughts last longer, yours or mine."

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364. *The Tales of Ise*, sec. 110: "In longing my soul has ventured forth alone. If you see it late in the night, please seek to trap it."

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That was all, but he was grateful for it.

"The smoke—it will follow me from this world. What a useless, insubstantial affair it was!"

Weeping uncontrollably, he set about a reply. There were many pauses and the words were fragmentary and disconnected and the hand like the tracks of a strange bird.

> "As smoke I shall rise uncertainly to the heavens,
> and yet remain where my thoughts will yet remain.

"Look well, I pray you, into the evening sky. Be happy, let no one reprove you; and, though it will do no good, have an occasional thought for me."

Suddenly worse again, he made his way tearfully back to his room. "Enough. Go while it is still early, please, and tell her of my last moments. I would not want anyone who already thinks it odd to think it even odder. What have I brought from other lives, I wonder, to make me so unhappy?"

Usually he kept her long after their business was finished, but today he dismissed her briefly. She was very sorry for him and did not want to go.

His nurse, who was her aunt, told Kojijū of his illness, weeping all the while.

Tō no Chūjō was in great alarm. "He had seemed better these last few days. Why the sudden change?"

"I cannot see why you are surprised," replied his son. "I am dying. That is all."

That evening the Third Princess was taken with severe pains.

Guessing that they were birth pangs, her women sent for Genji in great excitement. He came immediately. How vast and unconditional his joy would be, he thought, were it not for his doubts about the child. But no one must be allowed to suspect their existence. He summoned ascetics and put them to continuous spells and incantations, and he summoned all the monks who had made names for themselves as healers. The Rokujō mansion echoed with mystic rites. The princess was in great pain through the night and at sunrise was delivered of a child. It was a boy. Most unfortunate, thought Genji. It would not be easy to guard the secret if the resemblance to the father was strong. There were devices for keeping girls in disguise and of course girls did not have to appear in public as did boys. But there was the other side of the matter: given these nagging doubts from the outset, a boy did not require the attention which must go into rearing a girl.

But how very strange it all was! Retribution had no doubt come for the deed which had terrified him then and which he was sure would go on terrifying him to the end. Since it had come, all unexpectedly, in this world, perhaps the punishment would be lighter in the next.

Unaware of these thoughts, the women quite lost themselves in ministering to the child. Because it was born of such a mother in Genji's late years, it must surely have the whole of his affection.

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Kashiwagi dies, and after the Third Princess gives birth to his son, Kaoru, she immediately takes Buddhist vows despite Genji's protests. Kaoru, a beautiful little boy, is thought by the world to be Genji's son, and is raised in the Rokujō mansion.

The Rites

Three years have passed. Murasaki has continued to be in uncertain health since her great illness and again seeks permission from Genji to take Buddhist vows, but Genji stubbornly refuses. She weakens to the point where she is seldom able to be out of bed for a whole day. The Akashi daughter, who was raised by Murasaki and has since been named empress, visits her sickbed.

Murasaki had always found the heat very trying. This summer she was near prostration. Though there were no marked symptoms and though there was none of the unsightliness that usually goes with emaciation, she was progressively weaker. Her women saw the world grow dark before their eyes as they contemplated the future.

Distressed at reports that there was no improvement, the empress visited Nijō. She was given rooms in the east wing and Murasaki waited to receive her in the main hall. Though there was nothing unusual about the greetings, they reminded Murasaki, as indeed did everything, that the empress's little children would grow up without her. The attendants announced themselves one by one, some of them very high courtiers. A familiar voice, thought Murasaki, and another. She had not seen the empress in a very long while and hung on the conversation with fond and eager attention.

Genji looked in upon them briefly. "You find me disconsolate this evening," he said to the empress, "a bird turned away from its nest. But I shall not bore you with my complaints." He withdrew. He was delighted to see Murasaki out of bed, but feared that the pleasure must be a fleeting one.

"We are so far apart that I would not dream of troubling you to visit me, and I fear that it will not be easy for me to visit you."[365]

After a time the Akashi lady came in. The two ladies addressed each other affectionately, though Murasaki left a great deal unsaid. She did not want to be one of those who eloquently prepare the world to struggle along without them. She did remark briefly and quietly upon the evanescence of things, and her wistful manner said more than her words.

Genji's royal grandchildren were brought in.

"I spend so much time imagining futures for you, my dears. Do you suppose that I do after all hate to go?"

Still very beautiful, she was in tears. The empress would have liked to change the subject, but could not think how.

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365. The speaker may be either Murasaki or the empress.

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"May I ask a favor?" said Murasaki, very casually, as if she hesitated to bring the matter up at all. "There are numbers of people who have been with me for a very long while, and some of them have no home but this. Might I ask you to see that they are taken care of?" And she gave the names.

Having commissioned a reading from the holy writ, the empress returned to her rooms.

Little Niou, the prettiest of them all, seemed to be everywhere at once. Choosing a moment when she was feeling better and there was no one else with her, she seated him before her.

"I may have to go away. Will you remember me?"

"But I don't want you to go away." He gazed up at her, and presently he was rubbing at his eyes, so charming that she was smiling through her tears. "I like my granny,[366] better than Father and Mother. I don't want you to go away."

"This must be your own house when you grow up. I want the rose plum and the cherries over there to be yours. You must take care of them and say nice things about them, and sometimes when you think of it you might put flowers on the altar."

He nodded and gazed up at her, and then abruptly, about to burst into tears, he got up and ran out. It was Niou and the First Princess whom Murasaki most hated to leave. They had been her special charges, and she would not live to see them grow up.

The cool of autumn, so slow to come, was at last here. Though far from well, she felt somewhat better. The winds were still gentle, but it was a time of heavy dews all the same. She would have liked the empress to stay with her just a little while longer but did not want to say so. Messengers had come from the emperor, all of them summoning the empress back to court, and she did not want to put the empress in a difficult position. She was no longer able to leave her room, however much she might want to respect the amenities, and so the empress called on her. Apologetic and at the same time very grateful, for she knew that this might be their last meeting, she had made careful preparations for the visit.

Though very thin, she was more beautiful than ever—one would not have thought it possible. The fresh, vivacious beauty of other years had asked to be likened to the flowers of this earth, but now there was a delicate serenity that seemed to go beyond such present similes. For the empress the slight figure before her, the very serenity bespeaking evanescence, was utter sadness.

Wishing to look at her flowers in the evening light, Murasaki pulled herself from bed with the aid of an armrest.

Genji came in. "Isn't this splendid? I imagine Her Majesty's visit has done wonders for you."

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366. *Haha*, the most common word for "mother." Some commentators argue for *baba*, which means "old woman" or "grandmother."

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How pleased he was at what was in fact no improvement at all—and how desolate he must soon be!

> "So briefly rests the dew upon the *hagi*.
> Even now it scatters in the wind."

It would have been a sad evening in any event, and the plight of the dew even now being shaken from the tossing branches, thought Genji, must seem to the sick lady very much like her own.

> "In the haste we make to leave this world of dew,
> may there be no time between the first and last."

He did not try to hide his tears.

And this was the empress's poem:

> "A world of dew before the autumn winds.
> Not only theirs, these fragile leaves of grass."

Gazing at the two of them, each somehow more beautiful than the other, Genji wished that he might have them a thousand years just as they were; but of course time runs against these wishes. That is the great, sad truth.

"Would you please leave me?" said Murasaki. "I am feeling rather worse. I do not like to know that I am being rude and find myself unable to apologize." She spoke with very great difficulty.

The empress took her hand and gazed into her face. Yes, it was indeed like the dew about to vanish away. Scores of messengers were sent to commission new services. Once before it had seemed that she was dying, and Genji hoped that whatever evil spirit it was might be persuaded to loosen its grip once more. All through the night he did everything that could possibly be done, but in vain. Just as light was coming she faded away. Some kind power above, he thought, had kept the empress with her through the night. He might tell himself, as might all the others who had been with her, that these things have always happened and will continue to happen, but there are times when the natural order of things is unacceptable. The numbing grief made the world itself seem like a twilight dream. The women tried in vain to bring their wandering thoughts together. Fearing for his father, more distraught even than they, Yūgiri had come to him.

"It seems to be the end," said Genji, summoning him to Murasaki's curtains. "To be denied one's last wish is a cruel thing. I suppose that their reverences will have finished their prayers and left us, but someone qualified to administer vows must still be here. We did not do a great deal for her in this life, but perhaps the Great Buddha can be persuaded to turn a little light on the way

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she must take into the next. Tell them, please, that I want someone to give the tonsure. There is still someone with us who can do it, surely?"

He spoke with studied calm, but his face was drawn and he was weeping.

"But these evil spirits play very cruel tricks," replied Yūgiri, only slightly less benumbed than his father. "Don't you suppose the same thing has happened all over again? Your suggestion is of course quite proper. We are told that even a day and a night of the holy life brings untold blessings. But suppose this really is the end—can we hope that anything we do will throw so very much light on the way she must go? No, let us come to terms with the sorrow we have before us and try not to make it worse."

But he summoned several of the priests who had stayed on, wishing to be of service through the period of mourning, and asked them to do whatever could still be done.

He could congratulate himself on his filial conduct over the years, upon the fact that he had permitted himself no improper thoughts; but he had had one fleeting glimpse of her, and he had gone on hoping that he might one day be permitted another, even as brief, or that he might hear her voice, even faintly. The second hope had come to nothing, and the other—if he did not see her now he never would see her. He was in tears himself, and the room echoed with the laments of the women.

"Do please try to be a little quieter, just for a little while." He lifted the curtains as he spoke, making it seem that Genji had summoned him. In the dim morning twilight Genji had brought a lamp near Murasaki's dead face. He knew that Yūgiri was beside him, but somehow felt that to screen this beauty from his son's gaze would only add to the anguish.

"Exactly as she was," he whispered. "But as you see, it is all over."

He covered his face. Yūgiri too was weeping. He brushed the tears away and struggled to see through them as the sight of the dead face brought them flooding back again. Though her hair had been left untended through her illness, it was smooth and lustrous and not a strand was out of place. In the bright lamplight the skin was a purer, more radiant white than the living lady, seated at her mirror, could have made it. Her beauty, as if in untroubled sleep, emptied words like "peerless" of all content. He almost wished that the spirit which seemed about to desert him might be given custody of the unique loveliness before him.

Utterly devastated, Genji longs to renounce the world, but he resolves to wait until the immediate occasion has passed in order not to be perceived as weak. Throughout the next year he keeps to himself, seeing only his closest intimates, as each of the passing months brings memories of his lost love and a renewal of his grief.

The Wizard

Already at the beginning of the Eighth Month the autumn winds were lonely. Genji was busy with preparations for the memorial services. How swiftly the

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months had gone by! Everyone went through fasting and penance and the Paradise Mandala was dedicated. Chūjō[367] as usual brought holy water for Genji's vesper devotions. He took up her fan, on which she had written a poem:

> "This day, we are told, announces an end to mourning.
> How can it be, when there is no end to tears?"

He wrote beside it:

> "The days are numbered for him who yet must mourn,
> and are they numbered, the tears that yet remain?"

Early in the Ninth Month came the chrysanthemum festival. As always, the festive bouquets were wrapped in cotton to catch the magic dew.

> "On other mornings we took the elixir together.
> This morning lonely sleeves are wet with dew."

The Tenth Month was as always a time of gloomy winter showers. Looking up into the evening sky, he whispered to himself: "The rains are as the rains of other years." He envied the wild geese overhead, for they were going home.

> "O wizard flying off through boundless heavens,
> find her whom I see not even in my dreams."[368]

The days and months went by, and he remained inconsolable.

Presently the world was buzzing with preparations for the harvest festival and the Gosechi dances. Yūgiri brought two of his little boys, already in court service, to see their grandfather. They were very nearly the same age, and very pretty indeed. With them were several of their uncles, spruce and elegant in blue Gosechi prints, a very grand escort indeed for two little boys. At the sight of them all, so caught up in the festive gaiety, Genji thought of memorable occurrences on ancient festival days.

> "Our lads go off to have their Day of Light.[369]
> For me it is as if there were no sun."

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367. One of Murasaki's women.

368. In "The Song of Everlasting Sorrow," the emperor sends a wizard in search of the dead Yang Guifei. In chapter 1, Genji's grieving father is put in mind of the same passage. The word *maboroshi* (wizard) occurs in the tale only these two times.

369. *Toyonoakari*, the day following the harvest festival proper.

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And so he had made his way through the year, and the time had come to leave the world behind. He gave his attendants, after their several ranks, gifts to remember him by. He tried to avoid grand farewells, but they knew what was happening, and the end of the year was a time of infinite sadness. Among his papers were letters which he had put aside over the years but which he would not wish others to see. Now, as he got his affairs in order, he would come upon them and burn them. There was a bundle of letters from Murasaki among those he had received at Suma from his various ladies. Though a great many years had passed, the ink was as fresh as if it had been set down yesterday. They seemed meant to last a thousand years. But they had been for him, and he was finished with them. He asked two or three women who were among his closest confidantes to see to destroying them. The handwriting of the dead always has the power to move us, and these were not ordinary letters. He was blinded by the tears that fell to mingle with the ink until presently he was unable to make out what was written.

> "I seek to follow the tracks of a lady now gone
> to another world. Alas, I lose my way."

Not wanting to display his weakness, he pushed them aside.

The women were permitted glimpses of this and that letter, and the little they saw was enough to bring the old grief back anew. Murasaki's sorrow at being those few miles from him now seemed to remove all bounds to their own sorrow. Seeking to control a flow of tears that must seem hopelessly exaggerated, Genji glanced at one of the more affectionate notes and wrote in the margin:

> "I gather sea grasses no more, nor look upon them.
> Now they are smoke, to join her in distant heavens."

And so he consigned them to flames.

In the Twelfth Month the clanging of croziers as the holy name was invoked was more moving than in other years, for Genji knew that he would not again be present at the ceremony. These prayers for longevity—he did not think that they would please the Blessed One. There had been a heavy fall of snow, which was now blowing into drifts. The repast in honor of the officiant was elaborate and Genji's gifts were even more lavish than usual. The holy man had often presided over services at court and at Rokujō. Genji was sorry to see that his hair was touched with gray. As always, there were numerous princes and high courtiers in the congregation. The plum trees, just coming into bloom, were lovely in the snow. There should have been music, but Genji feared that this year music would make him weep. Poems were read, in keeping with the time and place.

There was this poem as Genji offered a cup of wine to his guest of honor:

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"Put blossoms in your caps today. Who knows
that there will still be life when spring comes round?"

This was the reply:

"I pray that these blossoms may last a thousand springs.
For me the years are as the deepening snowdrifts."

There were many others, but I neglected to set them down.

It was Genji's first appearance in public. He was handsomer than ever, indeed almost unbelievably handsome. For no very good reason, the holy man was in tears.

Genji was more and more despondent as the New Year approached.

Niou scampered about exorcising devils, that the New Year might begin auspiciously.

"It takes a lot of noise to get rid of them. Do you have any ideas?"

Everything about the scene, and especially the thought that he must say goodbye to the child, made Genji fear that he would soon be weeping again.

"I have not taken account of the days and months.
The end of the year—the end of a life as well?"

The festivities must be more joyous than ever, he said, and his gifts to all the princes and officials, high and low—or so one is told—quite shattered precedent.

Genji dies, and it seems that no one can take his place; everyone continues to grieve for him and Murasaki. Yūgiri maintains Genji's Rokujō and Nijō mansions, continuing to look after those of Genji's ladies who are still alive, along with his own large family, and ascends to a powerful place in the government. Years pass, and Kaoru, the Third Princess's son by Kashiwagi, thought by the world to be Genji's son, comes of age. He is a serious young man of a rather religious bent, mature beyond his years, and not given to romantic adventures. Kaoru is distinguished by a mysterious fragrance that trails him wherever he goes, somewhat to his consternation. Niou, the third son of the reigning emperor by the Akashi empress, also grows into an elegant, handsome young man, though one of rather more amorous inclinations than his friend and rival Kaoru.

The Lady at the Bridge

There was in those years a prince of the blood, an old man, left behind by the times. His mother was of the finest lineage. There had once been talk of seeking a favored position for him; but there were disturbances and a new alignment

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of forces,[370] at the end of which his prospects were in ruins. His supporters, embittered by this turn of events, were less than steadfast: they made their various excuses and left him. And so in his public life and in his private, he was quite alone, blocked at every turn. His wife, the daughter of a former minister, had fits of bleakest depression at the thought of her parents and their plans for her, now of course in ruins. Her consolation was that she and her husband were close as husbands and wives seldom are. Their confidence in each other was complete.

But here too there was a shadow: the years went by and they had no children. If only there were a pretty little child to break the loneliness and boredom, the prince would think—and sometimes give voice to his thoughts. And then, surprisingly, a very pretty daughter was in fact born to them. She was the delight of their lives. Years passed, and there were signs that the princess was again with child. The prince hoped that this time he would be favored with a son, but again the child was a daughter. Though the birth was easy enough, the princess fell desperately ill soon afterward, and was dead before many days had passed. The prince was numb with grief. The vulgar world had long had no place for him, he said, and frequently it had seemed quite unbearable; and the bond that had held him to it had been the beauty and the gentleness of his wife. How could he go on alone? And there were his daughters. How could he, alone, rear them in a manner that would not be a scandal?—for he was not, after all, a commoner. His conclusion was that he must take the tonsure. Yet he hesitated. Once he was gone, there would be no one to see to the safety of his daughters.

So the years went by. The princesses grew up, each with her own grace and beauty. It was difficult to find fault with them, they gave him what pleasure he had. The passing years offered him no opportunity to carry out his resolve.

The serving women muttered to themselves that the younger girl's very birth had been a mistake, and were not as diligent as they might have been in caring for her. With the prince it was a different matter. His wife, scarcely in control of her senses, had been especially tormented by thoughts of this new babe. She had left behind a single request: "Think of her as a keepsake, and be good to her."

The prince himself was not without resentment at the child, that her birth should so swiftly have severed their bond from a former life, his and his princess's.

"But such was the bond that it was," he said. "And she worried about the girl to the very end."

The result was that if anything he doted upon the child to excess. One almost sensed in her fragile beauty a sinister omen.

The older girl was comely and of a gentle disposition, elegant in face and in manner, with a suggestion behind the elegance of hidden depths. In quiet

370. The reference is to the accession of the Reizei emperor after Genji's return from exile.

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grace, indeed, she was the superior of the two. And so the prince favored each as each in her special way demanded. There were numerous matters which he was not able to order as he wished, however, and his household only grew sadder and lonelier as time went by. His attendants, unable to bear the uncertainty of their prospects, took their leave one and two at a time. In the confusion surrounding the birth of the younger girl, there had not been time to select a really suitable nurse for her. No more dedicated than one would have expected in the circumstances, the nurse first chosen abandoned her ward when the girl was still an infant. Thereafter the prince himself took charge of her upbringing.

Years pass, and the prince refuses to marry again, despite the urging of the people around him. He spends much of his time in religious observances but cannot bring himself to renounce the world. His daughters are his principal companions. As they grow up, he notices that although both are quiet and reserved, the elder, Ōigimi, tends to be moody, and the younger, Nakanokimi, possesses a certain shy gaiety.

He was the Eighth Prince, a younger brother of the shining Genji. During the years when the Reizei emperor was crown prince, the mother of the reigning emperor had sought in that conspiratorial way of hers to have the Eighth Prince named crown prince, replacing Reizei. The world seemed hers to rule as she wished, and the Eighth Prince was very much at the center of it. Unfortunately his success irritated the opposing faction. The day came when Genji and presently Yūgiri had the upper hand, and he was without supporters. He had over the years become an ascetic in any case, and he now resigned himself to living the life of the sage and hermit.

There came yet another disaster. As if fate had not been unkind enough already, his mansion was destroyed by fire. Having no other suitable house in the city, he moved to Uji, some miles to the southeast, where he happened to own a tastefully appointed mountain villa. He had renounced the world, it was true, and yet leaving the capital was a painful wrench indeed. With fishing weirs near at hand to heighten the roar of the river, the situation at Uji was hardly favorable to quiet study. But what must be must be. With the flowering trees of spring and the leaves of autumn and the flow of the river to bring repose, he lost himself more than ever in solitary meditation. There was one thought even so that never left his mind: how much better it would be, even in these remote mountains, if his wife were with him!

> "She who was with me, the roof above are smoke.
> And why must I alone remain behind?"

So much was the past still with him that life scarcely seemed worth living.

Mountain upon mountain separated his dwelling from the larger world. Rough people of the lower classes, woodcutters and the like, sometimes came

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by to do chores for him.[371] There were no other callers. The gloom continued day after day, as stubborn and clinging as "the morning mist on the peaks."[372]

There happened to be in those Uji mountains an abbot,[373] a most saintly man. Though famous for his learning, he seldom took part in public rites. He heard in the course of time that there was a prince living nearby, a man who was teaching himself the mysteries of the Good Law. Thinking this a most admirable undertaking, he made bold to visit the prince, who upon subsequent interviews was led deeper into the texts he had studied over the years. The prince became more immediately aware of what was meant by the transience and uselessness of the material world.

"In spirit," he confessed, quite one with the holy man, "I have perhaps found my place upon the lotus of the clear pond; but I have not yet made my last farewells to the world because I cannot bring myself to leave my daughters behind."

The abbot was an intimate of the Reizei emperor and had been his preceptor as well. One day, visiting the city, he called upon the Reizei emperor to answer any questions that might have come to him since their last meeting.

"Your honored brother," he said, bringing the Eighth Prince into the conversation, "has pursued his studies so diligently that he has been favored with the most remarkable insights. Only a bond from a former life can account for such dedication. Indeed, the depth of his understanding makes me want to call him a saint who has not yet left the world."

"He has not taken the tonsure? But I remember now—the young people do call him 'the saint who is still one of us.'"

Kaoru chanced to be present at the interview. He listened intently. No one knew better than he the futility of this world, and yet he passed useless days, his devotions hardly so frequent or intense as to attract public notice. The heart of a man who, though still in this world, was in all other respects a saint—to what might it be likened?

The abbot continued: "He has long wanted to cut his last ties with the world, but a trifling matter made it difficult for him to carry out his resolve. Now he has two motherless children whom he cannot bring himself to leave behind. They are the burden he must bear."[374]

The abbot himself had not entirely given up the pleasures of the world: he had a good ear for music. "And when their highnesses deign to play a duet,"

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371. There is possibly a suggestion that their manner was more familiar than their station should have allowed.

372. Anonymous, *Kokinshū*, no. 935: "My gloomy thoughts run on and on, unbroken as the morning mist on the peaks the wild geese pass."

373. *Ajari* (Skr. *acarya*). In general, any monk of sufficient learning to act as a preceptor; and in the Shingon and Tendai sects a specific clerical rank.

374. The abbot here uses an unusual verb form that apparently gives his speech a somewhat stilted or archaic flavor.

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he said, "they bid fair to outdo the music of the river, and put one in mind of the blessed musicians above."

The Reizei emperor smiled at this rather fusty way of stating the matter. "You would not expect girls who have had a saint for their principal companion to have such accomplishments. How pleasant to know about them—and what an uncommonly good father he must be! I am sure that the thought of having to leave them is pure torment. It is always possible that I will live longer than he, and if I do perhaps I may ask to be given responsibility for them."

He was himself the tenth son of the family, younger than his brother at Uji. There was the example of the Suzaku emperor, who had left his young daughter in Genji's charge. Something similar might be arranged, he thought. He would have companions to relieve the monotony of his days.

Kaoru was less interested in the daughters than in the father. Quite entranced with what he had heard, he longed to see for himself that figure so wrapped in the serenity of religion.

"I have every intention of calling on him and asking him to be my master," he said as the abbot left. "Might I ask you to find out, unobtrusively, of course, how he would greet the possibility?"

"And tell him, please," said the Reizei emperor, "that I have been much affected by your description of his holy retreat." And he wrote down a verse to be delivered to the Eighth Prince.

> "Wearily, my soul goes off to your mountains,
> and cloud upon circling cloud holds my person back?"

With the royal messenger in the lead, the abbot set off for Uji, thinking to visit the Eighth Prince on his way back to the monastery. The prince so seldom heard from anyone that he was overjoyed at these tidings. He ordered wine for his guests and side dishes peculiar to the region.

This was the poem he sent back to his brother:

> "I am not as free as I seem. From the gloom of the world
> I retreat only briefly to the Hill of Gloom."[375]

He declined to call himself one of the truly enlightened. The vulgar world still called up regrets and resentments, thought the Reizei emperor, much moved.[376]

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375. The poem contains a common pun on Uji, which suggests gloom. There also is a reference to a poem by Kisen, *Kokinshū*, no. 983: "In a hut to the south and east of the capital I dwell; the place is known as the Hill of the World of Gloom."

376. The Reizei emperor seems to think that the Eighth Prince's poem refers to the rivalry over the succession.

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The abbot also spoke of Kaoru, who, he said, was of a strongly religious bent. "He asked me most earnestly to tell you about him: to tell you that he has longed since childhood to give himself up to study of the scriptures; that he has been kept busy with inconsequential affairs, public and private, and has been unable to leave the world; that since these affairs are trivial in any case and no one could call his career a brilliant one, he could hardly expect people to notice if he were to lock himself up in prayers and meditation; that he has had an unfortunate way of letting himself be distracted. And when he had entrusted me with all this, he added that, having heard through me of your own revered person, he could not take his mind from you, and was determined to be your pupil."

"When there has been a great misfortune," said the prince, "when the whole world seems hostile—that is when most people come to think it a flimsy facade, and wish to have no more of it. I can only marvel that a young man for whom everything lies ahead, who has had everything his way, should start thinking of other worlds. In my own case, it often seems to me, the powers deliberately arranged matters to give my mind such a turn, and so I came to religion as if it were the natural thing. I have managed to find a certain amount of peace, I suppose; but when I think of the short time I have left and of how slowly my preparations creep forward, I know that what I have learned comes to nothing and that in the end it will still be nothing. No, I am afraid I would be a scandalously bad teacher. Let him think of me as a fellow seeker after truth, a very humble one."

Kaoru and the prince exchanged letters and presently Kaoru paid his first visit.

It was an even sadder place than the abbot's description had led him to expect. The house itself was like a grass hut put up for a few days' shelter, and as for the furnishings, everything even remotely suggesting luxury had been dispensed with. There were mountain villages that had their own quiet charm; but here the tumult of the waters and the wailing of the wind must make it impossible to have a moment free of sad thoughts. He could see why a man on the way to enlightenment might seek out such a place as a means of cutting his ties with the world. But what of the daughters? Did they not have the usual fondness for delicate, ladylike things?

A sliding partition seemed to separate the chapel from their rooms. A youth of more amorous inclinations would have approached and made himself known, curious to see what his reception would be. Kaoru was not above feeling a certain excitement at being so near; but a show of interest would have betrayed his whole purpose, which was to be free of just such thoughts, here in distant mountains. The smallest hint of frivolity would have denied the reason for the visit.

Deeply moved by the saintly figure before him, he offered the warmest avowals of friendship. His visits were frequent thereafter. Nowhere did he find

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evidence of shallowness in the discourses to which he was treated; nor was there a suggestion of pompousness in the prince's explanations of the scriptures and of his profoundly significant reasons, even though he had stopped short of taking the tonsure, for living in the mountains.

The world was full of saintly and learned men, but the stiff, forbidding bishops and patriarchs[377] who were such repositories of virtue had little time of their own, and he found it far from easy to approach them with his questions. Then there were lesser disciples of the Buddha. They were to be admired for observing the discipline, it was true; but they tended to be vulgar and obsequious in their manner and rustic in their speech, and they could be familiar to the point of rudeness. Since Kaoru was busy with official duties in the daytime, it was in the quiet of the evening, in the intimacy of his private chambers, that he liked to have company. Such people would not do.

Now he had found a man who combined great elegance with a reticence that certainly was not obsequious, and who, even when he was discussing the Good Law, was adept at bringing plain, familiar similes into his discourse. He was not, perhaps, among the completely enlightened, but people of birth and culture have their own insights into the nature of things. After repeated visits Kaoru came to feel that he wanted to be always at the prince's side, and he would be overtaken by intense longing when official duties kept him away for a time.

Impressed by Kaoru's devotion, the Reizei emperor sent messages; and so the Uji house, silent and forgotten by the world, came to have visitors again. Sometimes the Reizei emperor sent lavish gifts and supplies. In pleasant matters having to do with the seasons and the festivals and in practical matters as well, Kaoru missed no chance to be of service.

Three years went by. It was the end of autumn, and the time had come for the quarterly reading of the scriptures.[378] The roar of the fish weirs was more than a man could bear, said the Eighth Prince as he set off for the abbot's monastery, there to spend a week in retreat.

The princesses were lonelier than ever. It had been weighing on Kaoru's mind that too much time had passed since his last visit. One night as a late moon was coming over the hills he set out for Uji, his guard as unobtrusive as possible, his caparison of the simplest. He could go on horseback and did not have to worry about a boat, since the prince's villa was on the near side of the Uji River. As he came into the mountains the mist was so heavy and the underbrush so thick that he could hardly make out the path; and as he pushed

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377. Sōzu, Sōjō.

378. There was no fixed time for this. The meaning is that winter is coming, and if he does not hurry he will have missed the autumn observances. Autumn (see the next sentence) was the fishing season.

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his way through thickets the rough wind would throw showers of dew upon him from a turmoil of falling leaves. He was very cold, and, though he had no one to blame but himself, he had to admit that he was also very wet. This was not the sort of journey he was accustomed to. It was sobering and at the same time exciting.

> "From leaves that cannot withstand the mountain wind
> the dew is falling. My tears fall yet more freely."

He forbade his outrunners to raise their usual cries, for the woodcutters in these mountains could be troublesome. Brushing through a wattle fence, crossing a rivulet that meandered down from nowhere, he tried as best he could to silence the hoofs of his colt. But he could not keep that extraordinary fragrance from wandering off on the wind, and more than one family awoke in surprise at "the scent of an unknown master."[379]

As he drew near the Uji house, he could hear the plucking of he did not know what instrument, unimaginably still and lonely. He had heard from the abbot that the prince liked to practice with his daughters, but somehow had not found occasion to hear that famous koto. This would be his chance. Making his way into the grounds, he knew that he had been listening to a lute, tuned to the *ōjiki* mode.[380] There was nothing unusual about the melody. Perhaps the strangeness of the setting had made it seem different. The sound was cool and clean, especially when a string was plucked from beneath. The lute fell silent and there were a few quiet strokes on a koto. He would have liked to listen on, but he was challenged by a man with a somewhat threatening manner, one of the guards, it would seem.

The man immediately recognized him and explained that, for certain reasons, the prince had gone into seclusion in a mountain monastery. He would be informed immediately of the visit.

"Please do not bother," said Kaoru. "It would be a pity to interrupt his retreat when it will be over soon in any case. But do tell the ladies that I have arrived, sodden as you see me, and must go back with my mission unaccomplished; and if they are sorry for me that will be my reward."

The rough face broke into a smile. "They will be informed."

But as he turned to depart, Kaoru called him back. "No, wait a minute. For years I have been fascinated by stories I have heard of their playing, and this is my chance. Will there be somewhere that I might hide and listen for a while? If I were to rush in on them they would of course stop, and that would be the last thing I would want."

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379. Sosei, *Kokinshū*, no. 241: "Purple trousers—left behind by whom?—give sweetly forth the scent of an unknown master."

380. Or *ōshiki*. The tonic is A.

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His face and manner were such as to quell even the most untamed of rustics. "This is how it is. They are at it morning and night when there is no one around to hear. But let someone come from the city even if he is in rags, and they won't let you have a twang of it. No one's supposed to know they even exist. That's how His Highness wants it."

Kaoru smiled. "Now there is an odd sort of secret for you. The whole world knows that two specimens of the rarest beauty are hidden here. But come. Show me the way. I have all the best intentions. That is the way I am, I assure you." His manner was grave and courteous. "It is hard to believe that they can be less than perfect."

"Suppose they find out, sir. I might be in trouble."

Nonetheless he led Kaoru to a secluded wing fenced off by wattled bamboo and the guards to the west veranda, where he saw to their needs as best he could.

A gate seemed to lead to the princesses' rooms. Kaoru pushed it open a little. The blind had been half raised to give a view of the moon, more beautiful for the mist. A young girl, tiny and delicate, her soft robe somewhat rumpled, sat shivering at the veranda. With her was an older woman similarly dressed. The princesses were farther inside. Half hidden by a pillar, one had a lute before her and sat toying with the plectrum.[381] Just then the moon burst forth in all its brilliance.

"Well, now," she said. "This does quite as well as a fan for bringing out the moon." The upraised face was bright and lively.

The other, leaning against an armrest, had a koto before her. "I have heard that you summon the sun with one of those objects,[382] but you seem to have ideas of your own on how to use it." She was smiling, a melancholy, contemplative sort of smile.

"I may be asking too much, I admit, but you have to admit that lutes and moons are related."[383]

It was a charming scene, utterly unlike what Kaoru had imagined from afar. He had often enough heard the young women of his household reading from old romances. They were always coming upon such scenes, and he had thought them the most unadulterated nonsense. And here, hidden away from the world, was a scene as affecting as any in a romance. He was dangerously near losing control of himself. The mist had deepened until he could barely make out the figures of the princesses. Summon it forth again, he whispered—but a woman

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381. This is a much debated passage. We have been told that the older sister is a master of the lute; the younger, of the koto. But the description of the girl with the plectrum seems to fit the younger girl better.

382. This is obviously an allusion, but it has not been traced.

383. There are three sound holes on the face of a biwa lute, two known as half moons, the other as the full or "hidden" moon.

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had come from within to tell them of the caller. The blind was lowered and everyone withdrew to the rear of the house. There was nothing confused, nothing disorderly about the withdrawal, so calm and quiet that he caught not even a rustling of silk. Elegance and grace could at times push admiration to the point of envy.

He slipped out and sent someone back to the city for a carriage.

"I was sorry to find the prince away," he said to the man who had been so helpful, "but I have drawn some consolation from what you have been so good as to let me see. Might I ask you to tell them that I am here, and to add that I am thoroughly drenched?"

The ladies were in an agony of embarrassment. They had not dreamed that anyone would be looking in at them—and had he even overheard that silly conversation? Now that they thought of it, there had been a peculiar fragrance on the wind; but the hour was late and they had not paid much attention. Could anything be more embarrassing? Impatient at the woman assigned to deliver his message—she did not seem to have the experience for the task—Kaoru decided that there was a time for boldness and a time for reserve; and the mist was in his favor. He advanced to the blind that had been raised earlier and knelt deferentially before it. The countrified maids had not the first notion of what to say to him. Indeed they seemed incapable of so ordinary a courtesy as inviting him to sit down.

"You must see how uncomfortable I am," he said quietly. "I have come over steep mountains. You cannot believe, surely, that a man with improper intentions would have gone to the trouble. This is not the reward I expected. But I take some comfort in the thought that if I submit to the drenching time after time your ladies may come to understand."

They were young and incapable of a proper answer. They seemed to wither and crumple. It was taking a great deal of time to summon a more experienced woman from the inner chambers. The prolonged silence, Ōigimi feared, might make it seem that they were being coy.

"We know nothing, nothing. How can we pretend otherwise?" It was an elegantly modulated voice, but so soft that he could scarcely make it out.

"One of the more trying mannerisms of this world, I have always thought, is for people who know its cruelties to pretend that they do not. Even you are guilty of the fault, which I find more annoying than I can tell you. Your honored father has gained deep insights into the nature of things. You have lived here with him. I should have thought that you would have gained similar insights, and that they might now demonstrate their worth by making you see the intensity of my feelings and the difficulty with which I contain them. You cannot believe, surely, that I am the usual sort of adventurer. I fear that I am of a rather inflexible nature and refuse to wander in that direction even when others try to lead me. These facts are general knowledge and will perhaps have reached your ears. If I had your permission to tell you of my silent days, if I could hope to

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have you come forward and seek some relief from your solitude—I cannot describe the pleasure it would give me."

Ōigimi, too shy to answer, deferred to an older woman who had at length been brought from her room.

There was nothing reticent about her. "Oh no! You've left him out there all by himself! Bring him in this minute. I simply do not understand young people." The princesses must have found this as trying as the silence. "You see how it is, sir. His Highness has decided to live as if he did not belong to the human race. No one comes calling these days, not even people you'd think would never forget what they owe him. And here you are, good enough to come and see us. I may be stupid and insensitive, but I know when to be grateful. So do my ladies. But they are so shy."

Kaoru was somewhat taken aback. Yet the woman's manner suggested considerable polish and experience, and her voice was not unpleasant.

"I had been feeling rather unhappy," he said, "and your words cheer me enormously. It is good to be told that they understand."

He had come inside. Through the curtains, the old woman could make him out in the dawn light. It was as she had been told: he had discarded every pretense of finery and come in rough travel garb, and he was drenched. A most extraordinary fragrance—it hardly seemed of this world—filled the air.

"I would not want you to think me forward," she said, and there were tears in her voice; "but I have hoped over the years that the day might come when I could tell you a little, the smallest bit, of a sad story of long ago." Her voice was trembling. "In among my other prayers I have put a prayer that the day might come, and now it seems that the prayer has been answered. How I have longed for this moment! But see what is happening. I am all choked up before I have come to the first word."

He had heard, and it had been his experience, that old people weep easily. This, however, was no ordinary display of feeling.

"I have fought my way here so many times and not known that a perceptive lady like yourself was in residence. Come, this is your chance. Do not leave anything out."

"This is my chance, and there may not be another. When you are my age you can't be sure that you will last the night. Well, let me talk. Let me tell you that this old hag is still among the living. I have heard somewhere that Kojijū, the one who waited upon your revered mother—I have heard that she is dead. So it goes. Most of the people I was fond of are dead, the people who were young when I was young. And after I had outlived them all, certain family ties[384] brought me back from the far provinces, and I have been in the service of my

384. The old woman, Bennokimi, is a first cousin of Kojijū and of the Eighth Prince's deceased wife.

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ladies these five or six years. None of this, I am sure, will have come to your attention. But you may have heard of the young gentleman who was a guards captain when he died. I am told that his brother is now a major counselor.[385] It hardly seems possible that we have had time to dry our tears, and yet I count on my fingers and I see that there really have been years enough for you to be the fine young gentleman you are. They seem like a dream, all those years.

"My mother was his nurse. I was privileged myself to wait upon him. I did not matter, of course, but he sometimes told me secrets he kept from others, let slip things he could not keep to himself. And as he lay dying he called me to his side and left a will, I suppose you might call it. There were things in it I knew I must tell you of someday. But no more. You will ask why, having said this much, I do not go on. Well, there may after all be another chance and I can tell you everything. These youngsters are of the opinion that I have said too much already, and they are right." She was a loquacious old person obviously, but now she fell silent.

It was like a story in a dream, like the unprompted recital of a medium in a trance. It was too odd—and at the same time it touched upon events of which he had long wanted to know more. But this was not the time. She was right. Too many eyes were watching. And it would not do to surrender on the spot and waste a whole night on an ancient story.

"I do not understand everything you have said, I fear, and yet your talk of old times does call up fond thoughts. I shall come again and ask you to tell me the rest of the story. You see how I am dressed, and if the mist clears before I leave I will disgrace myself in front of the ladies. I would like to stay longer but do not see how I can."

As he stood up to leave, the bell of the monastery sounded in the distance. The mist was heavy. The sadness of these lives poured in upon him, of the isolation enforced by heavy mountain mists. They were lives into which the whole gamut of sorrows had entered, he thought, and he thought too that he understood why they preferred to live in seclusion.

"How very sad.

> "In the dawn I cannot see the path I took
> to find Oyama of the Pines in mist."

He turned away, and yet hesitated. Even ladies who saw the great gentlemen of the capital every day would have found him remarkable, and he quite dazzled these rustic maids. Ōigimi, knowing that it would be too much to ask one of them to deliver it for her, offered a reply, her voice soft and shy as before, and with a hint of a sigh in it.

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385. Kashiwagi was a guards captain, and his brother is Kōbai.

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"Our mountain path, enshrouded whatever the season,
is now closed off by the deeper mist of autumn."

The scene itself need not have detained him, but these evidences of loneliness made him reluctant to leave. Presently, uncomfortable at the thought of being seen in broad daylight, he went to the west veranda, where a place had been prepared for him, and looked out over the river.

"To have spoken so few words and to have had so few in return," he said as he left the princesses' wing of the house, "makes it certain that I shall have much to think about. Perhaps when we are better acquainted I can tell you of it. In the meantime, I shall say only that if you think me no different from most young men, and you do seem to, then your judgment in such matters is not what I would have hoped it to be."

His men had become expert at presiding over the weirs. "Listen to all the shouting," said one of them. "And they don't seem to be exactly boasting over what they've caught. The fish[386] are not cooperating."

Strange, battered little boats, piled high with brush and wattles, made their way up and down the river, each boatman pursuing his own sad, small livelihood at the uncertain mercy of the waters. "It is the same with all of us," thought Kaoru to himself. "Am I to boast that I am safe from the flood, calm and secure in a jeweled mansion?"

After his return to the city, Kaoru sends a note to Ōigimi in which he expresses the hope that he might appear before the princesses more freely in the future. The Eighth Prince, seeing the letter, chides Ōigimi for her treatment of the serious young man—he is no trifler, and the Eighth Prince has already hinted to him that he would like him to take care of the princesses after his own death. Kaoru tells his friend Niou, who has a reputation for amorousness and is "always mooning about the possibility of finding a great beauty lost away in the mountains," about the princesses. Niou is interested.

Kaoru makes another visit to Uji near the beginning of the Tenth Month. He hints to the prince that he would like to hear another sample of the princesses' music, but they refuse to accommodate him. Again, the prince mentions his concern about what will become of them when he is gone, and Kaoru renews his promise to look out for them.

When the prince had withdrawn for matins, Kaoru summoned the old woman. Her name was Bennokimi, and the Eighth Prince had her in constant attendance upon his daughters. Though in her late fifties, she was still favored with the graces of a considerably younger woman. Her tears flowing liberally, she told him of what an unhappy life "the young captain," Kashiwagi, had led, of how he had fallen ill and presently wasted away to nothing.

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386. *Hiuo* (literally, "ice fish"). The young of the *ayu* (sweet fish).

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It would have been a very affecting tale of long ago even if it had been about a stranger. Haunted and bewildered through the years, longing to know the facts of his birth, Kaoru had prayed that he might one day have a clear explanation. Was it in answer to his prayers that now, without warning, there had come a chance to hear of these old matters, as if in a sad dream? He too was in tears.

"It is hard to believe—and I must admit that it is a little alarming too—that someone who remembers those days should still be with us. I suppose people have been spreading the news to the world—and I have had not a whisper of it."

"No one knew except Kojijū and myself. Neither of us breathed a word to anyone. As you can see, I do not matter; but it was my honor to be always with him, and I began to guess what was happening. Then sometimes—not often, of course—when his feelings were too much for him, one or the other of us would be entrusted with a message. I do not think it would be proper to go into the details. As he lay dying, he left the testament I have spoken of. I have had it with me all these years—I am no one, and where was I to leave it? I have not been as diligent with my prayers as I might have been, but I have asked the Blessed One for a chance to let you know of it; and now I think I have a sign that he is here with us. But the testament: I must show it to you. How can I burn it now? I have not known from one day to the next when I might die, and I have worried about letting it fall into other hands. When you began to visit His Highness I felt somewhat better again. There might be a chance to speak to you. I was not merely praying for the impossible, and so I decided that I must keep what he had left with me. Some power stronger than we has brought us together." Weeping openly now, she told of the illicit affair and of his birth, as the details came back to her.

"In the confusion after the young master's death, my mother too fell ill and died; and so I wore double mourning. A not very nice man who had had his eye on me took advantage of it all and led me off to the West Country, and I lost all touch with the city. He too died, and after ten years and more I was back in the city again, back from a different world. I have for a very long time had the honor to be acquainted indirectly with the sister of my young master, the lady who is a consort of the Reizei emperor, and it would have been natural for me to go into her service. But there were those old complications, and there were other reasons too. Because of the relationship on my father's side of the family[387] I have been familiar with His Highness's household since I was a child, and at my age I am no longer up to facing the world. And so I have become the rotted stump you see,[388] buried away in the mountains. When did Kojijū

387. Her father was the uncle of the Eighth Prince's wife.

388. Kengei, *Kokinshū*, no. 875: "The form is a rotted stump, in mountains deep; you can, if you try, make the heart come back to life."

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die? I wonder. There aren't many left of the ones who were young when I was young. The last of them all; it isn't easy to be the last one, but here I am."

Another dawn was breaking.

"We do not seem to have come to the end of this old story of yours," said Kaoru. "Go on with it, please, when we have found a more comfortable place and no one is listening. I do remember Kojijū slightly. I must have been four or five when she came down with consumption and died, rather suddenly. I am most grateful to you. If it hadn't been for you I would have carried the sin[389] to my grave."

The old woman handed him a cloth pouch in which several mildewed bits of paper had been rolled into a tight ball.

"Take these and destroy them. When the young master knew he was dying, he got them together and gave them to me. I told myself I would give them to Kojijū when next I saw her and ask her to be sure that they got to her lady. I never saw her again. And so I had my personal sorrow and the other too, the knowledge that I had not done my duty."

With an attempt at casualness, he put the papers away. He was deeply troubled. Had she told him this unsolicited story, as is the way with the old, because it seemed to her an interesting piece of gossip? She had assured him over and over again that no one else had heard it, and yet—could he really believe her?

After a light breakfast he took his leave of the prince. "Yesterday was a holiday because the emperor was in retreat, but today he will be with us again. And then I must call on the Reizei princess, who is not well, and there will be other things to keep me busy. But I will come again soon, before the autumn leaves have fallen."

"For me, your visits are a light to dispel in some measure the shadows of these mountains."

Back in the city, Kaoru took out the pouch the old woman had given him. The heavy Chinese brocade bore the inscription "For My Lady."[390] It was tied with a delicate thread and sealed with Kashiwagi's name. Trembling, Kaoru opened it. Inside were multi-hued bits of paper, on which, among other things, were five or six answers by his mother to notes from Kashiwagi.

And, on five or six sheets of thick white paper, apparently in Kashiwagi's own hand, like the strange tracks of some bird, was a longer letter: "I am very ill, indeed I am dying. It is impossible to get so much as a note to you, and my longing to see you only increases. Another thing adds to the sorrow: the news that you have withdrawn from the world.

> "Sad are you, who have turned away from the world,
> but sadder still my soul, taking leave of you.

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389. The sin of not having properly honored his real father.

390. It bears the character for "up" or "over" (*ue*). There are several theories as to what it might mean, of which this seems the most credible.

Materiál chránený autorským právom

"I have heard with strange pleasure of the birth of the child. We need not worry about him, for he will be reared in security. And yet—

> "Had we but life, we could watch it, ever taller,
> the seedling pine unseen among the rocks."

The writing, fevered and in disarray, went to the very edge of the paper. The letter was addressed to Kojijū.

The pouch had become a dwelling place for worms and smelled strongly of mildew; and yet the writing, in such compromising detail, was as clear as if it had been set down the day before. It would have been a disaster if the letter had fallen into the hands of outsiders, he thought, half in sorrow and half in alarm. He was so haunted by this strange affair, stranger than any the future could possibly bring, that he could not persuade himself to set out for court. Instead he went to visit his mother. Youthful and serene, she had a sutra in her hand, which she put shyly out of sight upon his arrival. He must keep the secret to himself, he thought. It would be cruel to let her know of his own new knowledge. His mind jumped from detail to detail of the story he had heard.

Beneath the Oak

In the Second Month of the following year, Niou goes on a pilgrimage to Hatsuse and stops at Uji, hoping to have an opportunity to pay a call on the princesses, but the size of his entourage prevents him from getting away. Kaoru, who is with him, delivers a note on his behalf. The Eighth Prince urges his daughters to reply, albeit cautiously and casually, so as not to excite him, and thus Niou begins a correspondence with Nakanokimi, though he is never sure which of the princesses is responsible for the letters he receives. At this point, Ōigimi is twenty-five and Nakanokimi is twenty-three.

The prince has reached an age that corresponds to a dangerous year and wishes to renounce the world but continues to worry about his daughters. In the autumn, Kaoru is promoted to the position of middle counselor. He visits Uji and promises again to look after the princesses. The Eighth Prince indicates that he suspects his death is near.

With the deepening of autumn, the prince's gloom also deepened. Concluding that he must withdraw to some quiet refuge where nothing would upset his devotions, he left behind various admonitions.

"Parting is the way of the world. It cannot be avoided: but the grief is easier to bear when you have a companion to share it with. I must leave it to your imagination—for I cannot tell you—how hard it is for me to go off without you, knowing that you are alone. But it would not do to wander lost in the next world because of ties with this one. Even while I have been here with you, I have as good as run away from the world; and it is not for me to say how it should be when I am gone. But please remember that I am not the only one.

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You have your mother to think of too. Please do nothing that might reflect on her name. Men who are not worthy of you will try to lure you out of these mountains, but you are not to yield to their blandishments. Resign yourselves to the fact that it was not meant to be—that you are different from other people and were meant to be alone—and live out your lives here at Uji. Once you have made up your minds to it, the years will go smoothly by. It is good for a woman, even more than for a man, to be away from the world and its slanders."

The princesses were beyond thinking about the future. It was beyond them, indeed, to think how they would live if they were to survive their father by so much as a day. These gloomy and ominous instructions left them in the cruelest uncertainty. He had in effect renounced the world already, but for them, so long beside him, to be informed thus suddenly of a final parting—it was not from intentional cruelty that he had done it, of course, and yet in such cases a certain resentment is inevitable.

On the evening before his departure he inspected the premises with unusual care, walking here, stopping there. He had thought of this Uji villa as the most temporary of dwellings, and so the years had gone by. Everything about him suggesting freedom from worldly taints, he turned to his devotions, and thoughts of the future slipped in among them from time to time. His daughters were so very much alone—how could they possibly manage after his death?

He summoned the older women of the household.

"Do what you can for them, as a last favor to me. The world does not pay much attention when an ordinary house goes to ruin. It happens every day. I don't suppose people pay so very much attention when it happens to one like ours. But if fate seems to have decided that the collapse is final, a man does feel ashamed, and wonders how he can face his ancestors. Sadness, loneliness—they are what life brings. But when a house is kept in a manner that becomes its rank, the appearances it maintains, the feelings it has for itself, bring their own consolation. Everyone wants luxury and excitement; but you must never, even if everything fails—you must never, I beg of you, let them make unsuitable marriages."

As the moonlight faded in the dawn, he went to take leave of his daughters. "Do not be lonely when I am gone. Be happy, find ways to occupy yourselves. One does not get everything in this world. Do not fret over what has to be."

He looked back and looked back again as he started up the path to the monastery.

The girls were lonely indeed, despite these admonitions. What would the one do if the other were to go away? The world offers no security in any case; and what could they possibly do for themselves if they were separated? Smiling over this small matter, sighing over that rather more troublesome detail, they had always been together.

It was the morning of the day when the prince's meditations were to end. He would be coming home. But in the evening a message came instead: "I

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have been indisposed since this morning. A cold, perhaps—whatever it is, I am having it looked after. I long more than ever to see you."

The princesses were in consternation. How serious would it be? They hastened to send quilted winter garments. Two and three days passed, and there was no sign of improvement. A messenger came back. The ailment was not of a striking nature, he reported. The prince was generally indisposed. If there should be even the slightest improvement he would brave the discomfort and return home.

The abbot, in constant attendance, sought to sever the last ties with this world. "It may seem like the commonest sort of ailment," he said, "but it could be your last. Why must you go on worrying about your daughters? Each of us has his own destiny, and it does no good to worry about others." He said that the prince was not to leave the temple under any circumstances.

It was about the twentieth of the Eighth Month, a time when the autumn skies are conducive to melancholy in any case. For the princesses, lost in their own sad thoughts, there was no release from the morning and evening mists. The moon was bright in the early-morning sky, the surface of the river was clear and luminous. The shutters facing the mountain were raised. As the princesses gazed out, the sound of the monastery bell came down to them faintly—and, they said, another dawn was upon them.

But then came a messenger, blinded with tears. The prince had died in the night.

Not for a moment had the princesses stopped thinking of him; but this was too much of a shock, it left them dazed. At such times tears refuse to come. Prostrate, they could only wait for the shock to pass. A death is sad when, as is the commoner case, the survivors have a chance to make proper farewells. For the princesses, who did not have their father with them, the sense of loss was even more intense. Their laments would not have seemed excessive if they had wailed to the very heavens. Reluctant to accept the thought of surviving their father by a day, they asked what they were to do now. But he had gone a road that all must take, and weeping did nothing to change that cruel fact.

As had been promised over the years, the abbot arranged for the funeral. The princesses sent word that they would like to see their father again, even in death. And what would be accomplished? replied the holy man. He had trained their father to acceptance of the fact that he would not see them again, and now it was their turn. They must train their hearts to a freedom from binding regrets. As he told of their father's days in the monastery, they found his wisdom somewhat distasteful.

It had long been their father's most fervent wish to take the tonsure, but in the absence of someone to look after his daughters he had been unable to turn his back on them. Day after day, so long as he had lived, this inability had been at the same time the solace of a sad life and the bond that tied him to a world he wished to leave. Neither to him who had now gone the inevitable road nor to them who must remain behind had fulfillment come.

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Kaoru and Niou send notes to the princesses, expressing their condolences. Nakanokimi is too distressed to reply. Ōigimi, reflecting on Niou's sophistication, is fearful and permits no response to him. Thinking of her father's last instructions, she resolves to live out her life as a spinster. She replies freely to Kaoru's earnest letters but remains reserved when he visits, somewhat to his annoyance.

Things become even lonelier for the princesses with the coming of winter, and Kaoru calls again, urging Ōigimi to accept Niou as a suitor for Nakanokimi. Genji's son Yūgiri, now minister of the right, hopes to arrange a match between Niou and his daughter Rokunokimi, but Niou does not seem interested. In the summer, Kaoru has an opportunity to spy on the princesses through a small hole in a partition, which further whets his interest.

Trefoil Knots

Kaoru visits Uji again in the fall to assist with the memorial services on the anniversary of the Eighth Prince's death. He indicates to Ōigimi his interest in her and attempts to persuade her to be more friendly. She rebuffs him, citing her father again, but hopes Kaoru will help arrange something for Nakanokimi.

He summoned Bennokimi.

"It was thoughts of the next life that first brought me here; and then, in those last sad days, he left a request with me. He asked me to look after his daughters in whatever way seemed best. I have tried; and now it comes as something of a surprise that they should be disregarding their own father's wishes. Do you understand it any better than I do? I am being pushed to the conclusion that he had hopes for them which they do not share. I know you will have heard about me, what an odd person I am, not much interested in the sort of things that seem to interest everyone else. And now, finally, I have found someone who does interest me, and I am inclined to believe that fate has had a hand in the matter; and I gather that the gossips already have us married. Well, if that is the case—I know it will seem out of place for me to say so—other things being equal, we might as well do as the prince wished us to, and indeed as everyone else does. It would not be the first case the world has seen of a princess married to a commoner.

"And I have spoken more than once about my friend Niou to your other lady. She simply refuses to believe me when I tell her she needn't worry about the sort of husband he is likely to make. I wonder if someone might just possibly be working to turn her against her father's wishes. You must tell me everything you know."

His remarks were punctuated by many a brooding sigh.

There is a kind of cheeky domestic who, in such situations, assumes a knowing manner and encourages a man in what he wants to believe. Bennokimi was not such a one. She thought the match ideal, but she could not say so.

"My ladies are different from others I have served. Perhaps they were born different. They have never been much interested in the usual sort of thing. We

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who have been in their service—even while their father was alive, we really had no tree to run to for shelter. Most of the other women decided fairly soon that there was no point in wasting their lives in the mountains, and they went away, wherever their family ties led them. Even people whose families had been close to the prince's for years and years—they were not having an easy time of it, and most of them gave up and went away. And now that he is gone it is even worse. We wonder from one minute to the next who will be left. The ones who have stayed are always grumbling, and I am sure that my ladies are often hurt by the things they say. Back in the days when the prince was still with us, they say, well, he had his old-fashioned notions, and they had to be respected for what they were. My ladies were, after all, royal princesses, he was always saying, and there came a point at which a suitor had to be considered beneath them, and that was that; and so they stayed single. But now they are worse than single, they are completely alone in the world, and it would take a very cruel person to find fault if they were to do what everyone else does. And really, could anyone expect them to go through their lives as they are now? Even the monks who wander around gnawing pine needles—even they have their different ways of doing things, without forgetting the Good Law. They cannot deny life itself, after all. I am just telling you what these women say. The older of my ladies refuses to listen to a word of it, at least as it has to do with her; but I gather she does hope that something can be found for her sister, some way to live an ordinary, respectable life. She has watched you climb over these mountains year after year and she knows that not many people would have assumed responsibility as if it were the most natural thing in the world. I really do think that she is ready to talk of the details, and all that matters is what you have in mind yourself. As for Prince Niou, she does not seem to think his letters serious enough to bother answering."

"I have told you of her father's last request. I was much moved by it, and I have vowed to go on seeing them. You might think that, from my point of view, either of your ladies would do as well as the other, and I really am very flattered that she should have such confidence in me. But you know, even a man who doesn't have much use for the things that excite most people will find himself drawn to a lady, and when that happens he does not suddenly go running after another—though that would not be too difficult, I suppose, for the victim of a casual infatuation.

"But no. If only she would stop retreating and putting up walls between us. If only I could have her here in front of me, to talk to about the little things that come and go. If so much did not have to be kept back.

"I am all by myself, and I always have been. I have no brother near enough my own age to talk to about the amusing things and the sad things that happen. You will say that I have a sister, but the things I really want to talk about are always an impossible jumble, and an empress is hardly the person to go to with them. You will think of my mother. It is true that she looks young enough to

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be my sister, but after all she is my mother. All the others seem so haughty and so far away. They quite intimidate me. And so I am by myself. The smallest little flirtation leaves me dumb and paralyzed; and when it seems that the time has come to show my feelings to someone I really care for, I am not up to the smallest gesture. I may be hurt, I may be furious, and there I stand like a post, knowing perfectly well how ridiculous I am.

"But let us talk of Niou. Don't you suppose that problem could be left to me? I promise that I will do no one any harm."

It would be far better than this lonely life, thought the old woman, wishing she could tell him to go ahead. But they were both so touchy. She thought it best to keep her own counsel.

Kaoru whiled away the time, thinking that he would like to stay the night and perhaps have the quiet talk of which he had spoken. For Ōigimi the situation was next to intolerable. Though he had made it known only by indirection, his resentment seemed to be rising to an alarming pitch. The most trivial answer was almost more than she could muster. If only he would stay away from that one subject! In everything else he was a man of the most remarkable sympathy, a fact that only added to her agitation. She had someone open the doors to the chapel and stir the lamps, and withdrew behind a blind and a screen. There were also lights outside the chapel. He had them taken away—they were very unsettling, he said, for they revealed him in shameful disorder—and lay down near the screen. She had fruit and sweets brought to him, arranged in a tasteful yet casual manner. His men were offered wine and very tempting side dishes. They withdrew to a corridor, leaving the two alone for what they assumed would be a quiet, intimate conversation.

She was in great agitation, but in her manner there was something poignantly appealing that delighted and—a pity that it should have been so—excited him. To be so near, separated from her only by a screen, and to let the time go by with no perceptible sign that the goal was near—it was altogether too stupid. Yet he managed an appearance of calm as he talked on of this amusing event and that melancholy one. There was much to interest her in what he said, but from behind her blinds she called to her women to come nearer. No doubt thinking that chaperones would be out of place, they pretended not to hear, and indeed withdrew yet further as they lay down to rest. There was no one to replenish the lamps before the holy images. Again she called out softly, and no one answered.

"I am not feeling at all well," she said finally, starting for an anteroom. "I think a little sleep might do me good. I hope you sleep well."

"Don't you suppose a man who has fought his way over mountains might feel even worse? But that's all right. Just having you here is enough. Don't go off and leave me."

He quietly pushed the screen aside. She was in precipitous flight through the door beyond.

Bahan dengan hak cipta

"So this is what you mean by a friendly talk," she said angrily as he caught at her sleeve. Far from turning him away, her anger added to the fascination. "It is not at all what I would have expected."

"You seem determined not to understand what I mean by friendliness, and so I thought I would show you. Not what you would have expected—and what, may I ask, did you expect? Stop trembling. You have nothing to be afraid of. I am prepared to take my vow before the Blessed One here. I have done everything to avoid upsetting you. No one in the world can have dreamed what an eccentric affair this is. But I am an eccentric and a fool myself, and will no doubt continue to be so."

He stroked the hair that flowed in the wavering light. The softness and the luster were all that he could have asked for. Suppose someone with more active inclinations were to come upon this lonely, unprotected house—there would be nothing to keep him from having his way. Had the visitor been anyone but himself, matters would by now have come to a showdown. His own want of decision suddenly revolted him. Yet here she was, weeping and wringing her hands, quite beside herself. He would have to wait until consent came of its own accord. Distressed at her distress, he sought to comfort her as best he could.

"I have allowed an almost indecent familiarity, and I have had no idea of what was going through your mind; and I may say that you have not shown a great deal of consideration, forcing me to display myself in these unbecoming colors. But I am at fault too. I am not up to what has to be done, and I am sorry for us both." It was too humiliating, that the lamplight should have caught her in somber, shabby gray.

"Yes, I have been inconsiderate, and I am ashamed and sorry. They give you a good excuse, those robes of mourning. But don't you think you might just possibly be making too much of them? You have seen something of me over the years, and I doubt if mourning gives you a right to act as if we had just been introduced. It is clever of you but not altogether convincing."

He told her of the many things he had found it so hard to keep to himself, beginning with that glimpse of the two princesses in the autumn dawn. She was in an agony of embarrassment. So he had had this store of secrets all along, and had managed to feign openness and indifference!

He now pulled a low curtain between them and the altar and lay down beside her. The smell of the holy incense, the particularly strong scent of anise, stabbed at his conscience, for he was more susceptible in matters of belief than most people. He told himself that it would be ill considered in the extreme, now of all times, when she was in mourning, to succumb to temptation; and he would be going against his own wishes if he failed to control himself. He must wait until she had come out of mourning. Then, difficult though she was, there would surely be some slight easing of the tensions.

Autumn nights are sad in the most ordinary of places. How much sadder in wailing mountain tempests, with the calls of insects sounding through the

Bahan dengan hak cipta

hedges. As he talked on of life's uncertain turns, she occasionally essayed an answer. He was touched and pleased. Her women, who had spread their bedclothes not far away, sensed that a happy arrangement had been struck up and withdrew to inner apartments. She thought of her father's admonitions. Strange and awful things can happen, she saw, to a lady who lives too long. It was as if she were adding her tears to the rushing torrent outside.

The dawn came on, bringing an end to nothing. His men were coughing and clearing their throats, there was a neighing of horses—everything made him think of descriptions he had read of nights on the road. He slid back the door to the east, where dawn was in the sky, and the two of them looked out at the shifting colors. She had come out toward the veranda. The dew on the ferns at the shallow eaves was beginning to catch the light. They would have made a very striking pair, had anyone been there to see them.

"Do you know what I would like? To be as we are now. To look out at the flowers and the moon, and be with you. To spend our days together, talking of things that do not matter."

His manner was so unassertive that her fears had finally left her. "And do you know what I would like? A little privacy. Here I am quite exposed, and a screen might bring us closer."

The sky was red, there was a whirring of wings close by as flocks of birds left their roosts. As if from deep in the night, the matin bells came to them faintly.

"Please go," she said with great earnestness. "It is almost daylight, and I do not want you to see me."

"You can't be telling me to push my way back through the morning mists? What would that suggest to people? No, make it look, if you will, as if we were among the proper married couples of the world, and we can go on being the curiosities we in fact seem to be. I promise you that I will do nothing to upset you; but perhaps I might trouble you to imagine, just a little, how genuine my feelings are."

"If what you say is true," she replied, her agitation growing as it became evident that he was in no hurry to leave, "then I am sure you will have your way in the future. But please, this morning, let me have my way." She had to admit that there was little she could do.

"So you really are going to send me off into the dawn? Knowing that it is 'new to me,'[391] and that I am sure to lose my way?"

The crowing of a cock was like a summons back to the city.

> "The things by which one knows the mountain village
> are brought together in these voices of dawn."

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391. Probably an allusion.

Bahan dengan hak cipta

She replied:

> "Deserted mountain depths where no birds sing,
> I would have thought. But sorrow has come to visit."

Seeing her as far as the door to the inner apartments, he returned by the way he had come the evening before, and lay down; but he was not able to sleep. The memories and regrets were too strong. Had his emotions earlier been toward her as they were now, he would not have been as passive over the months. The prospect of going back to the city was too dreary to face.

Ōigimi, in agony at the thought of what her women would have made of it all, found sleep as elusive. A very harsh trial it was, going through life with no one to turn to; and as if that huge uncertainty were not enough, there were these women with all their impossible suggestions. They as good as formed a queue, coming to her with proposals that had nothing to recommend them but the expediency of the moment; and if in a fit of inattention she were to accede to one of them, she would have shame and humiliation to look forward to. Kaoru did not at all displease her. The Eighth Prince had said more than once that if Kaoru should be inclined to ask her hand, he would not disapprove. But no. She wanted to go on as she was. It was her sister, now in the full bloom of youth, who must live a normal life. If the prince's thoughts in the matter could be applied to her sister, she herself would do everything she could by way of support. But who was to be her own support? She had only Kaoru, and, strangely, things might have been easier had she found herself in superficial dalliance with an ordinary man. They had known each other for rather a long time, and she might have been tempted to let him have his way. His obvious superiority and his aloofness, coupled with a very low view of herself, had left her prey to shyness. In timid retreat, it seemed, she would end her days.

Ōigimi tries to keep Kaoru at arm's length and even considers offering Nakanokimi as a substitute for herself. One evening Kaoru, with the assistance of the princesses' attendants, intrudes again behind their screens. In a panic, Ōigimi slips out and leaves the sleeping Nakanokimi behind. Kaoru is aware that he is with the other girl but spends the night beside her anyway—he finds her rather attractive. Nakanokimi believes, incorrectly, that her sister had allowed this to happen deliberately and refuses to speak to her. Kaoru decides to resolve the situation by bringing Niou to Nakanokimi at last. Niou is more than willing. Niou sneaks in to Nakanokimi's side, much as Kaoru had done, while Kaoru spends another chaste night with Ōigimi, who is aghast at Kaoru's subterfuge. The young men leave Uji, and Ōigimi convinces Nakanokimi that she had no part in the men's plan. Niou returns each of the next two nights, thus sealing his marriage with Nakanokimi. The younger sister is won over by his charm. Because of his position and the scrutiny his activities receive in the capital, however, he is unable to visit as much as he would like thereafter. His mother and father, the empress and emperor,

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disapprove of his nocturnal wanderings. They force him to reside in the palace and to marry Yūgiri's daughter Rokunokimi. Niou's heart remains with Nakanokimi, but the princesses are greatly dismayed by rumors of his impending marriage combined with his failure to visit Uji. Kaoru makes plans to bring Ōigimi to the capital, but feeling responsible for leaving her sister prey to Niou's apparent defection, she stops eating and begins wasting away. Kaoru is very concerned and commissions services for her recovery, but to no avail.

He seldom left Ōigimi's bedside, and his presence was a comfort to the women of the house. The wind was so high that Nakanokimi was having trouble with her curtains. When she withdrew to the inner rooms the ugly old women followed in some confusion. Kaoru came nearer and spoke to Ōigimi. There were tears in his voice.

"And how are you feeling? I have lost myself in prayers, and I fear they have done no good at all. It is too much, that you will not even let me hear your voice. You are not to leave me."

Though barely conscious, she was still careful to hide her face. "There are many things I would like to say to you, if I could only get back a little of my strength. But I am afraid—I am sorry—that I must die."

Tears were painfully near. He must not show any sign of despair—but soon he was sobbing audibly. What store of sins had he brought with him from previous lives, he wondered, that, loving her so, he had been rewarded with sorrow and sorrow only, and that he now must say goodbye? If he could find a flaw in her, he might resign himself to what must be. She became the more sadly beautiful the longer he gazed at her, and the more difficult to relinquish. Though her hands and arms were as thin as shadows, the fair skin was still smooth. The bedclothes had been pushed aside. In soft white robes, she was so fragile a figure that one might have taken her for a doll whose voluminous clothes hid the absence of a body. Her hair, not so thick as to be a nuisance, flowed down over her pillow, the luster as it had always been. Must such beauty pass, quite leave this world? The thought was not to be endured. She had not taken care of herself in her long illness, and yet she was far more beautiful than the sort of maiden who, not for a moment unaware that someone might be looking at her, is forever primping and preening. The longer he looked at her, the greater was the anguish.

"If you leave me, I doubt that I will stay on very long myself. I do not expect to survive you, and if by some chance I do, I will wander off into the mountains. The one thing that troubles me is the thought of leaving your sister behind."

He wanted somehow to coax an answer from her. At the mention of her sister, she drew aside her sleeve to reveal a little of her face.

"I am sorry that I have been so out of things. I may have seemed rude in not doing as you have wished. I must die, apparently, and my one hope has been that you might think of her as you have thought of me. I have hinted as

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much, and had persuaded myself that I could go in peace if you would respect this one wish. My one unsatisfied wish, still tying me to the world."

"There are people who walk under clouds of their own, and I seem to be one of them. No one else, absolutely no one else, has stirred a spark of love in me, and so I have not been able to follow your wishes. I am sorry now; but please do not worry about your sister."

She was in greater distress as the hours went by. He summoned the abbot and others and had incantations read by well-known healers. He lost himself in prayers. Was it to push a man toward renunciation of the world that the Blessed One sent such afflictions? She seemed to be vanishing, fading away like a flower. No longer caring what sort of spectacle he might make, he wanted to shout out his resentment at his own helplessness. Only half in possession of her senses, Nakanokimi sensed that the last moment had come. She clung to the corpse until that forceful old woman, among others, pulled her away. She was only inviting further misfortunes, they said.

Was it a dream? Kaoru had somehow not accepted the possibility that things would come to this pass. Turning up the light, he brought it to the dead lady's face. She lay as if sleeping, her face still hidden by a sleeve, as beautiful as ever. If only he could go on gazing at her as at the shell of a locust. The women combed her hair preparatory to having it cut, and the fragrance that came from it, sad and mysterious, was that of the living girl. He wanted to find a flaw, something to make her seem merely ordinary. If the Blessed One meant by all this to bring renunciation and resignation, then let him present something repellent, to drive away the regrets. So he prayed; but no relief was forthcoming. Well, he said presently, nothing was left but to commit the body to flames, and so he set about the sad duty of making the funeral arrangements. He walked unsteadily beside the body, scarcely feeling the ground beneath his feet. In a daze, he made his way back to the house. Even the last rites had been faltering, insubstantial; very little smoke had risen from the pyre.

Kaoru remains in Uji for some time, lost in grief. Niou receives permission from his mother to bring Nakanokimi to the capital and to install her in the Nijō mansion (which he had inherited from Genji and Murasaki). She moves in the Second Month of the following year. Kaoru wishes he could make Nakanokimi a substitute for her sister and berates himself for having let Niou have her. Niou settles down happily with Nakanokimi, who eventually bears him a son. Plans are made for Kaoru to marry the Second Princess, a daughter of the reigning emperor and half sister of Niou, but he is unenthusiastic about the match, still longing for Ōigimi, and makes advances toward Nakanokimi, who is rather distressed by the finalization of Niou's marriage to Yūgiri's daughter Rokunokimi. Nakanokimi manages to distract Kaoru by telling him about a half sister whom she has just met, the result of the Eighth Prince's affair with one of his attendants. The girl, Ukifune, was never recognized by her father and had been living in the eastern provinces with her mother and stepfather, the governor of Hitachi. Told that she greatly

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resembles Ōigimi, Kaoru is intrigued. He catches a glimpse of her at the Uji bridge, on her way back from a pilgrimage to Hatsuse and, struck by her similarity to the princesses, resolves to have her.

A Boat upon the Waters

Ukifune's boorish stepfather becomes angered by her mother's partiality to the girl over his own children and disrupts her impending marriage to a guards lieutenant. The mother asks Nakanokimi to take the girl in, and Nakanokimi allows her to hide in the west wing of her house. The girl is shy and somewhat countrified, but Nakanokimi is much moved by her resemblance to Ōigimi. The women of the household attempt to keep her presence there secret from Niou, but the incorrigible prince discovers her and makes advances to her. Nakanokimi's women manage to thwart him, but Ukifune's mother is horrified and moves the girl secretly to another residence. With the assistance of Bennokimi, Kaoru whisks Ukifune off to Uji and leaves her there while he prepares a house for her in the capital.

Niou has been unable to forget the girl, and tries desperately to find out who she is. Eventually he succeeds in intercepting a letter from Ukifune to Nakanokimi and learns that Kaoru has a lady hidden at Uji. He sneaks off to Uji and gains admittance to the girl by pretending to be Kaoru. He notes Ukifune's resemblance to Nakanokimi but is unable to discover her identity. Smitten, he spends two nights with her.

Kaoru, meanwhile, having a brief respite from his duties, set off in his usual quiet way for Uji. He went first to pay his respects and offer a prayer at the monastery. In the evening, after distributing gifts to the monks whom he had put to invoking the holy name, he went on to the Uji villa. Though incognito might have been appropriate, he had made no attempt to hide his rank. In informal but careful court dress, he was the embodiment of calm nobility. How could she possibly receive him? thought Ukifune, in near panic. The very skies seemed to reproach her. The dashing figure of his rival came back to her. Could she see him[392] again? Niou had said that she had every chance of driving all his other ladies away and capturing his affections for herself alone. She had heard that he was ill and had sharply curtailed his affairs, and that his house echoed with services for his recovery. How hurt he would be when he learned of this visit! Kaoru was very different. He had an air as of unsounded depths and a quiet, meditative dignity. He used few words as he apologized for his remissness and he said almost nothing that suggested loneliness and deprivation. Yet he did say, choosing his words most carefully, that he had wanted to

392. The antecedent could be either Kaoru or Niou.

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see her, and his controlled earnestness moved her more than any number of passionate avowals could have. He was very handsome; but that aside, she was sure that he would be a more reliable support, over long years, than Niou. It would be a great loss if he were to catch word of the strange turn her affections had taken. Niou's improbable behavior had left its mark, and she had to thank him for it; but he was altogether too impetuous. She could expect nothing of an enduring nature from him. She would be very sad indeed if Kaoru were to fling her away in anger.

She was a sad little figure, lost in the turmoil of her thoughts. She had matured, acquired new composure, over the months. No doubt, in the boredom of country life, she had had time for meditation.

"The house I am building is almost finished." His tone was more intimate and affectionate than usual. "I went to see it the other day. The waters are gentle, as different as they can be from this wild river, and the garden has all the flowers of the city. It is very near my Sanjō place. Nothing need keep us from seeing each other every day. I'd like to move you there in the spring, I think, if you don't mind."

Niou could scarcely have known of his friend's plans when, in a letter the day before, he had spoken of finding a quiet place for her. She was very sorry, but she should not yield further, she knew, to his advances. And yet his image did keep floating before her eyes. What a wretched predicament to be in!

"Life was much easier and much pleasanter," said Kaoru, "back in the days when you were not quite so given to tears. Has someone been talking about me? Would a person in my position come over such a long and difficult road if he had less than the best intentions?"

He went to the veranda railing and sat gazing at the new moon. They were both lost in thoughts, he of the past, of days and people now gone, she of the future and her growing troubles. The scene was perfection: the hills were veiled in a mist, and crested herons had gathered at a point along the frozen strand. Far down the river, where the Uji bridge cut its dim arc, faggot-laden boats were weaving in and out. All the details peculiar to the place were brought together. When he looked out upon the scene it was always as if events of old were fresh before his eyes. Even had he been with someone for whom he cared nothing, the air of Uji would have brought on strange feelings of intimacy. How much more so in the company of a not unworthy substitute for Ōigimi. Ukifune was gaining all the while in assurance and discernment, in her awareness of how city people behaved, and she was more beautiful each time he saw her. At a loss to console her, for it seemed that her tears were about to spill over, he offered a poem:

> "No need to grieve. The Uji bridge stands firm.
> They too stand firm, the promises I have made you.

"I am sure that you know what I mean."

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She replied:

> "The bridge has gaps, one crosses gingerly.
> Can one be sure it will not rot away?"

He found it more difficult than ever to leave her. But people talked, and he would have his fill of her company once he had moved her to the city. He left at dawn. These evidences of improvement added to the sorrow of parting.

Toward the middle of the Second Month the court assembled to compose Chinese poetry. Both Niou and Kaoru were present. The music was appropriate to the season, and Niou was in fine voice as he sang "A Branch of Plum."[393] Yes, he was the most accomplished of them all, everyone said. His one failing, not an easy one to forgive, was a tendency to lose himself in amorous dalliance of an unworthy sort.

It began to snow and a wind had come up. The festivities were quickly halted and everyone withdrew to Niou's rooms, where a light repast was served. Kaoru was called out to receive a message. The snow, now deeper, was dimly lit by the stars. The fragrance which he sent back into the room made one think how uselessly "the darkness of the spring night" was laboring to blot it out.[394]

"Does she await me?"[395] he said to himself, able somehow to infuse even such tiny, disjointed fragments of poetry with sudden life.

Of all the poems he could have picked, thought Niou. His heart racing, he pretended to be asleep. Clearly his friend's feelings for Ukifune passed the ordinary. He had hoped that the lady at the bridge had spread her cloak for him alone, and it was sad and annoying that Kaoru should have similar hopes. Drawn to such a man, could the girl possibly shift her affections to a trifler like himself?

The next day, with snow drifted high outside, the courtiers appeared in the imperial presence to read their poems. Niou was very handsome, indeed at his youthful best. Kaoru, perhaps because he was two or three years older,[396] seemed the calmer and more mature of the two, the model of the personable, cultivated young aristocrat. Everyone agreed that the emperor could not have found a better son-in-law. He had unusual literary abilities and a good head for practical matters as well. Their poems read, the courtiers withdrew. The assembly was loud in proclaiming the superiority of Niou's, but he was not pleased. How

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393. *Saibara* is a type of popular song.

394. Oshikōchi no Mitsune, *Kokinshū*, no. 41: "The darkness of the spring nights may hide their colors, but can the scent of the plum blossoms be hidden too?"

395. Anonymous, *Kokinshū*, no. 689: "Cloak spread for lonely sleep, does she await me, the lady at the Uji Bridge tonight?"

396. This is inconsistent with what we have been told before. Niou was born in "New Herbs: Part Two"; Kaoru, in "The Oak Tree."

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easygoing they were, he said to himself, how fortunate to have room in their heads for such trivia.

Some days later, unsettled still at Kaoru's behavior that snowy evening, Niou made elaborate excuses and set out for Uji. In the capital only traces of snow remained, as if awaiting a companion,[397] but in the mountains the drifts were gradually deeper. The road was even more difficult than he had remembered it. His men were near tears from apprehension and fatigue. The secretary who had been his guide to Uji was also vice-minister of rites. Both positions carried heavy responsibilities, and it was ridiculous to see him hitching up his trousers like any ordinary foot soldier.

The people at Uji had been warned, but were sure that he would not brave the snow. Then, late in the night, word was brought in to Ukon of his arrival. So he really was fond of her, thought Ukifune. Ukon's worries—how would it all end? she had been asking herself—dropped away, at least for the night. There was no way of turning him back, and she concluded that someone else must now be made a partner in the conspiracy. She chose the woman Jijū, who was another of Ukifune's special favorites, and who could be trusted not to talk.

"It is most improper, I know," said Ukon, "but we must stand together and keep it from the others."

They led him inside. The perfume from his wet robes, flooding into the deepest corners of the hall, could have been troublesome; but they told everyone, convincingly enough, that their visitor was Kaoru. To go back before dawn would be worse than not to have come at all; yet someone was certain to spy him out in the morning light. He had therefore asked Tokikata to have a certain house beyond the river made ready. Tokikata, who had gone on ahead to see to the arrangements, returned late in the night and reported that everything was in the best of order. Ukon too was wondering how he meant to keep the escapade a secret. She had been awakened from deep slumber and she was trembling like a child lost in the snow.

Without a word, he took Ukifune up in his arms and carried her off. Jijū followed after and Ukon was left to watch the house. Soon they were aboard one of the boats that had seemed so fragile out on the river. As they rowed into the stream, she clung to Niou, frightened as an exile to some hopelessly distant shore. He was delighted. The moon in the early-morning sky shone cloudless upon the waters. They were at the Islet of the Oranges,[398] said the boatman, pulling up at a large rock over which evergreens trailed long branches.

"See," said Niou, "they are fragile pines, no more, but their green is so rich and deep that it lasts a thousand years.

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397. Ki no Tsurayuki, *Gosenshū*, no. 472: "Black was my hair, and now it is white and whiter, like snows that wait for their comrades to return."

398. Tachibana no Kojima.

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"A thousand years may pass, it will not waver,
this vow I make in the lee of the Islet of Oranges."

What a very strange place to be, thought the girl.

"The colors remain, here on the Islet of Oranges.
But where go I, a boat upon the waters?"

The time was right, and so was the girl, and so was her poem: for him, at least, things could not have been more pleasingly arranged.

They reached the far bank of the river. An attendant helped him ashore, the girl still in his arms. No one else was to touch her, he insisted.

The custodian of the house was wondering what sort of woman could have produced such an uncourtly uproar. It was a temporary house, rough and unfinished, which Tokikata's uncle, the governor of Inaba, had put up on one of his manors. Crude plaited screens such as Niou had not seen before offered almost no resistance to the wind. There were patches of snow at the fence, clouds had come up, bringing new flurries of snow, and icicles glistened at the eaves. In the daylight the girl seemed even prettier than by candlelight. Niou was dressed simply, against the rigors of the journey. A fragile little figure sat huddled before him, for he had slipped off her outer robe. And so here she was, she said to herself, not even properly dressed, before a royal prince. There was nothing, nothing at all, to protect her from his gaze. She was wearing five or six white singlets, somewhat rumpled, soft and lustrous to the hems of the sleeves and skirts, more pleasing, he thought, than any number of colors piled one upon another. He seldom saw women with whom he kept constant company in quite such informal dress. He was enchanted.

And so Jijū too (a pretty young woman) was witness to the scene. Who might she be? Niou had asked when he saw her climbing uninvited into the boat. She must not be told his name. Jijū, for her part, was dazzled. She had not been in the company of such a fine gentleman before.

The custodian made a great fuss over Tokikata, thinking him to be the leader of the party. Tokikata, who had appropriated the next room for himself, was in good form. He made an amusing game of evading the questions the custodian kept putting in reverent tones.

"There have been bad omens, very bad, and I must stay away from the city for a while. No one is to see me."

And so Niou and Ukifune passed pleasant hours with no fear of being observed. No doubt, thought Niou, once more in the clutches of jealousy, she was equally amiable when she received Kaoru. He let it be known that Kaoru had taken the emperor's own daughter for his bride and seemed devoted to her. He declined (let us say out of charity) to mention the snatch of poetry he had overheard that snowy evening.

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"You seem to be cock of the walk," he said when Tokikata came with towels and refreshments. "But keep out of sight while you're about it. Someone might want to imitate you."

Jijū, a susceptible young lady, was having such a good time. She spent the whole day with Tokikata.

Looking toward the city over the drifting snow, Niou saw forests emerging from and sinking back into the clouds. The mountain above caught the evening glow as in a mirror. He described, with some embroidering, the horror of last night's journey. A crude rustic inkstone having been brought to him, he set down a poem as if in practice:

> "I pushed through snowy peaks, past icy shores,
> dauntless all the way—O daunting one!

"It is true, of course, that I had a horse at Kohata."[399]

In her answering poem she ventured an objection:[400]

> "The snow that blows to the shore remains there, frozen.
> Yet worse my fate: I am caught, dissolve in midair."

This image of fading in midair rather annoyed him. Yes, she was being difficult, she had to agree, tearing the paper to bits. He was always charming, and he was quite irresistible when he was trying to please.

He had said that he would be in retreat for two days. Each unhurried hour seemed to bring new intimacy. The clever Ukon contrived pretexts for sending over fresh clothes. Jijū smoothed her mistress's hair and helped her into a robe of deep purple and a cloak of figured magenta lined also with magenta—an unexceptionable combination. Taking up Jijū's apron,[401] he had Ukifune try it on as she ladled water for him. Yes, his sister the First Princess would be very pleased to take such a girl into her service. Her ladies-in-waiting were numerous and wellborn, but he could think of none among them capable of putting the girl to shame.

But let us not look in too closely upon their dalliance.

He told her again and again how he wanted to hide her away, and he tried to extract unreasonable promises from her. "You are not to see him, understand, until everything is arranged."

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399. *Man'yōshū*, no. 2425, from the *Hitomaro Collection*: "A horse I might have had, to cross Kohata. But love would not let me wait. I have come on foot."

400. Unclear. Perhaps she inks out his poem or, immediately after having written it, her own.

401. *Shibira* is an overgarment of some kind. He is treating her like an underling to see how she might perform in the service of his sister.

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That was too much to ask of her. She shed a few silent tears. He, for his part, was almost strangled with jealousy. Even now she was unable to forget Kaoru! He talked on and on, now weeping, now reproaching her.

Late in the night, again in a warm embrace, they started back across the river.

"I doubt if the man to whom you seem to give the top ranking can be expected to treat you as well. You will know what I mean, I trust."

It was true, she thought, nodding. He was delighted.

Ukon opened the side door and the girl went in, and he was left feeling utterly desolate.

As usual after such expeditions, he returned to Nijō. His appetite quite left him and he grew paler and thinner by the day, to the consternation of the whole court. In the stir that ensued he was unable to get a decent letter off to Uji.

That officious nurse of Ukifune's had been with her daughter, who was in confinement; but now that she was back Ukifune was scarcely able to glance at such letters as did come. Her mother hated having her off in the wilderness, but consoled herself with the thought that Kaoru would make a dependable patron and guardian. The indications were that he would soon, albeit in secret, move her to a place near his Sanjō mansion. Then they would be able to look the world square in the face! The mother began seeking out accomplished serving women and pretty little girls and sending them off to her daughter. All this was as it should be, Ukifune knew; yet the image of the dashing, impetuous Niou, now reproaching her, now wheedling and cajoling, insisted upon coming back. When she dozed off for a moment, there he would be in her dreams. How much easier for everyone if he would go away!

The rains continued, day after day. Chafing at his inability to travel that mountain road, Niou thought how constricting was "the cocoon one's parents weave about one"[402]—and that was scarcely a kind way to characterize the concern his royal parents felt for him. He sent off a long letter in which he set down his thoughts as they came to him.

> "I gaze your way in search of the clouds above you.
> I see but darkness, so dreary these days of rain."

His hand was if anything more interesting the less care he took with it. She was still young and rather flighty, and these avowals of love set up increasingly strong tremors in response. Yet she could not forget the other gentleman, a gentleman of undoubted depth and nobility, perhaps because it was he who had first made her feel wanted. Where would she turn if he were to hear of this sordid affair and abandon her? And her mother, who lived for the day when he

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402. Kakinomoto no Hitomaro, *Shūishū*, no. 895: "How tight the cocoon one's parents weave about one. Its prisoner, I may not see my love."

Material com direitos autorais

would give her a home, would certainly be upset, and very angry too. Prince Niou, judging from his letters, burned with impatience; but she had heard a great deal about his volatility and feared that his fondness for her was a matter of the passing moment. Supposing he were indeed to hide her away and number her among his enduring loves—how could she then face Nakanokimi, her own sister? The world kept no secrets, as his success in searching her out after that strange, fleeting encounter in the dusk had demonstrated. Kaoru might bring her into the city, but was it possible that his rival would fail to seek her out there too? And if Kaoru were to turn against her, she knew that she would have herself to blame.

Both men make plans to bring Ukifune to the capital. Eventually Kaoru learns that Niou has been writing to Ukifune, and he hints to her that he knows. Ukifune is in an agony of indecision. Although excited by Niou's ardor, she feels she owes allegiance to Kaoru. Eventually Niou, frustrated that she has stopped writing to him, rushes off to Uji and attempts to see her. Her women refuse to admit him.

Ashamed of her swollen eyes, she was late in arising the next morning. She put her dress in a semblance of order and took up a sutra. Let my sin be light, she prayed, for going ahead of my mother. She took out the sketch Niou had made for her, and there he was beside her again, handsome, confident, courtly. The sorrow was more intense, she was sure, than if she had seen him the night before. And she was sad too for the other gentleman, the one who had vowed unshakable fidelity, who had said that they would go off to some place of quiet retirement. To be laughed at, called a shallow, frivolous little wench, would be worse than to die and bring sorrow to such an estimable gentleman.

> "If in torment I cast myself away,
> my sullied name will drift on after me."

She longed to see her mother again, and even her ill-favored brothers and sisters, who were seldom on her mind. And she thought of Nakanokimi. Suddenly, indeed, the people she would like to see once more seemed to form in troops and battalions. Her women, caught up in preparations for the move, dyeing new robes and the like, would pass by with this and that remark, but she paid no attention. She sat up through the night, ill and half distraught, wondering how she might steal into the darkness unobserved. Looking out over the river in the morning, she felt nearer death than a lamb on its way to the slaughter.

A note came from Niou, telling once more of his unhappiness. Not wishing to compromise herself at this very late date, she sent back only a poem:

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"Should I leave no trace behind in this gloomy world,
what target then would you have for your complaints?"

She wanted also to tell Kaoru of her last hours; but the two men were very close friends and the thought of their comparing notes revolted her. It would be better to speak openly of her decision to neither.

A letter came from her mother: "I had a most ominous dream of you last night, and am having scriptures read in several temples. Perhaps because I had trouble getting back to sleep, I have been napping today, and I have had another dream, equally frightening. I waste no time, therefore, in getting off this letter. Do be careful. You are so far away from all of us, the wife of the gentleman who visits you is a disturbingly strong-minded lady, and it worries me terribly that I should have had such a dream at a time when you are not well. I really am very worried. I would like to visit you, but your sister goes on having a difficult time of it. We wonder if she might be in the clutches of some evil spirit, and I have the strictest orders from the governor not to leave the house for a moment. Have scriptures read in your monastery there, please, if you will."

With the letter were offerings of cloth and a request to the abbot that sutras be read. How sad, thought the girl, that her mother should go to such trouble when it was already too late. She composed her answer while the messenger was off at the monastery. Though there was a great deal that she would have liked to say, she set down only this poem:

"We shall think of meeting in another world
and not confuse ourselves with dreams of this."

She lay listening to the monastery bells as they rang an accompaniment to the sutras, and wrote down another poem, this one at the end of the list that had come back from the monastery of the sutras to be read:

"Join my sobs to the fading toll of the bell,
to let her know that the end of my life has come."

The messenger had decided not to return that night. She tied her last poem to a tree in the garden.

"Here I am having palpitations," said Nurse, "and she says she's been having bad dreams. Tell the guards to be extra careful. Why will you not have something to eat? Come, a cup of this nice gruel."

Do please be quiet, Ukifune was thinking. The woman was still alert and perceptive enough, but she was old and hideously wrinkled. Yet another one who should have been allowed to die first—and where would she go now? Ukifune wanted to offer at least a hint of what was about to happen, but she

Material com direitos autorais

knew that the old woman would shoot bolt upright and begin shrieking to the heavens.

"When you let your worries get the best of you," sighed Ukon, asking to lie down near her mistress, "they say your soul sometimes leaves your body and goes wandering. I imagine that's why she has these dreams. Please, my lady, I ask you again: make up your mind one way or the other, and call it fate, whatever happens."

The girl lay in silence, her soft sleeve pressed to her face.

Ukifune disappears, and the Uji house is in chaos. The women discover her note to her mother and realize what she has done. They inform everyone that she died in the night and hold a hasty funeral for her. Kaoru, Niou, and the girl's mother all grieve.

At Writing Practice

The bishop of Yokawa, on Mount Hiei, a holy and learned man, had a mother some eighty years old and a sister in her fifties. In fulfillment of a vow made long ago, they had been on a pilgrimage to Hatsuse. The bishop's favorite disciple had been with them. Having finished their prayers and offered up images and scriptures, they were climbing the Nara Slope on the return journey when the old woman was taken ill. She was in such discomfort that they could not ask her to go on. What were they to do? An acquaintance had a house at Uji, and it was decided to stop there for a day or two. When the old woman failed to improve, word was sent to the bishop. He had determined to remain in his mountain retreat until the end of the year, not even venturing down to the city, but there seemed a danger that his mother, of such an age that she could go at any time, might die on the journey. He hurried to her side. He himself and certain of his disciples whose ministrations had on other occasions been successful set about prayers and incantations—though one might have told them, and they would not have denied it, that she had lived a long enough life already.

The Uji acquaintance was troubled. "I have plans for a pilgrimage to Mitake, and for a week now I have been fasting and otherwise getting ready. Can I risk having a very old and ailing lady in the house?"

The bishop understood, and the house was in any case small and shabby. They would proceed back toward Hiei by easy stages. Then it was discovered that the stars were against them, and that plan too had to be abandoned. The bishop remembered the Uji villa of the late Suzaku emperor. It would be in the vicinity, and he knew the steward. He sent to ask whether they might use it for a day or two.

The messenger came back to report that the steward and his family had left for Hatsuse the day before.

Material com direitos autorais

The caretaker, a most unkempt old man, came with him. "Yes, if it suits your convenience, do please come immediately. The main hall is vacant. Pilgrims are always using it."

"Splendid." The bishop sent someone to make an inspection. "It is a public building, you might say, but it should be quiet enough."

The caretaker, used to guests, had simple accommodations ready.

The bishop went first. The house was badly run-down and even a little frightening. He ordered sutras read. The disciple who had been to Hatsuse and another of comparable rank had lesser clerics, to whom such tasks came naturally, prepare torches. For no very good reason, they wandered around to the unfrequented rear of the main hall. Under a grove of some description, a bleak, forbidding place, they saw an expanse of white. What could it possibly be? They brought their torches nearer and made out a seated human figure.

"A fox? They do sometimes take human shapes, filthy creatures. If we don't make it come out I don't know who else will." One of the lesser monks stepped forward.

"Careful, careful," said another. "We can be sure it's up to no good." Not letting his eyes wander for an instant from the thing, he made motions with his hands toward exorcising it.

The bishop's favored disciple was sure that his hair would have been standing on end if he had had any. The bold torchbearer, however, advanced resolutely upon the figure. It was a girl with long, lustrous hair. Leaning against the thick and very gnarled root of a tree, she was weeping bitterly.

"Why, this is strange. Maybe we should tell the bishop."

"Very strange indeed," said another, running off to report the discovery.

"People are always talking about foxes in human form," said the bishop, "but do you know I have never seen one?" He came out for a look.

All the available domestics were at work in the kitchen and elsewhere, seeing to the needs of the unexpected guests. These postern regions were deserted save for the half-dozen men watching the thing. No change was to be detected in it. The hours passed, the night seemed endless. Daylight would tell them whether or not it was human, thought the bishop, silently going over appropriate spells, and seeking to quell whatever force it might be with mystic hand motions.

Presently he reached a conclusion. "It is human. It is no monstrous apparition. Go ask her who she is and why she is here. Don't be afraid. She is no ghost—though possibly a corpse thrown away hereabouts has come back to life."

"A corpse thrown away at the Suzaku emperor's own villa? No, Your Reverence. At the very least it is someone a fox spirit or a wood spirit or something of the sort has coaxed away from home and then abandoned. The place will be contaminated, and for our purposes the timing could hardly be worse."

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Someone called for the caretaker, and the summons echoed menacingly across the empty grounds. He came running out, a somewhat ludicrous figure with his cap perched high on his head.

"Do you have any young women living here? Look at this, if you will."

"Ah, yes. The foxes are at it again. Strange things are always turning up under this tree. Two years or so ago, in the fall it would have been, a little boy, maybe two years old, he lived up the road. They dragged him off and left him right here at the foot of this tree. It happens all the time." He did not seem in the least upset.

"Had the child been killed?"

"Oh, no. He's still alive, I'd imagine. Foxes are always after people, but they never do anything really bad." His manner suggested that such occurrences were indeed commonplace. The emergency domestic arrangements seemed to weigh more heavily on his mind.

"Suppose we watch for a while," said the bishop, "and see whether or not we observe foxes at work."

He ordered the brave torchbearer to approach and challenge the strange figure.

"Who are you? Tell us who you are. Devil, fox, god, wood spirit? Don't think you can hold out against His Reverence. He won't be cheated. Who are you? Come on, now, tell us who you are."

He tugged at a sleeve. The girl pressed it to her face and wept all the more bitterly.

"Come on, now. The sensible thing would be to tell us." He tugged more assertively, though he rather hoped he would not be permitted a view of the face. It might prove to be the hideous mask of the eyeless, noseless she-devil[403] he had heard about. But he must give no one reason to doubt his mettle. The figure lay face in arms, sobbing audibly now.

"Whatever it is, it's not the sort of thing you see just every day." He peered down at the figure. "But we're in for a storm.[404] She'll die if we leave her out in it, that's for sure. Let's move her in under the fence."

"She has all the proper limbs," said the bishop, "and every detail suggests that she is human. We cannot leave her to die before our eyes. It is sad when the fish that swim in the lake or the stag that bays in the hills must die for want of help. Life is fleeting. We must cherish what we have of it, even so little as a day or two. She may have fallen into the clutches of some minor god or devil, or been driven from home, a victim of foul conspiracy. It may be her fate to

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403. *Meoni* has been taken by some commentators to mean not "she-devil" but the homophonous "eye-devil." According to medieval commentaries, an eyeless and noseless monster lived on Mount Hiei, to which the brave torchbearer has come.

404. There is mention in the preceding chapter of a heavy rain on the day after Ukifune's disappearance.

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die an unkind death. But such, even such, are they whom the Blessed One will save. Let us have a try at medicines and seek to revive her. If we fail, we shall still have done our best."

He had the torchbearer carry her inside.

"Consider what you are doing, sir," objected one of the disciples. "Your honored mother is dangerously ill and this will do her no good."

"We do not know what it is," replied another, "but we cannot leave it here for the rain to pound to death."

It would be best not to let the servants know. The girl was put to bed in a remote and untenanted part of the hall.

The old nun's carriage was brought up, amid chatter about the stubbornness of her affliction.

"And how is the other?" asked the bishop when the excitement had somewhat subsided.

"She seems to have lost her very last ounce of strength—sometimes we wonder if she is still breathing—and she has not said a word. Something has robbed her of her faculties."

"What is this?" asked the younger nun, the bishop's sister.

"Not in my upward of six decades have I seen anything so odd." And the bishop described it.

"I had a dream at Hatsuse." The nun was in tears. "What is she like? Do let me see her."

"Yes, by all means. You will find her over beyond the east door."

The nun hurried off. No one was with the girl, who was young and pretty and indefinably elegant. The white damask over her scarlet trousers gave off a subtle perfume.

"My child, my child. I wept for you, and you have come back to me."

She had some women carry the girl to an inner room. Not having witnessed the earlier events, they performed the task equably.

The girl looked up through half-closed eyes.

She did not seem to understand. The nun forced medicine upon her, but she seemed on the point of fading away.

They must not let her die after she had been through so much. The nun called for the monk who had shown himself to be the most capable in such matters. "I am afraid that she is not far from death. Let her have all your best spells and prayers."

"I was right in the first place," he grumbled. "He should have let well enough alone." But he commenced reading the sutra for propitiating the local gods.

"How is she?" The bishop looked in. "Find out what it is that has been at her. Drive it away, drive it away."

"She will not live, sir, I am sure of it. And when she dies we'll be in for a retreat we could perfectly well have avoided. She seems to be of good rank, and we can't just run away from the corpse. A bother, that is what I call it."

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"You do talk a great deal," said the nun. "But you are not to tell anyone. If you do you can expect an even worse bother." She had almost forgotten her mother in the struggle to save the girl. Yes, she was a stranger, nothing to them, if they would have it so; but she was a very pretty stranger. Everyone who saw her joined in prayers that she be spared. Occasionally she would open her eyes, and there would be tears in them.

"What am I to do? The Blessed One has brought you in place of the child I have wept for, I am sure of it, and if you go too, I shall have to weep again. Something from another life has brought us together. I know that too. Speak to me. Please. Say something, anything."

"I have been thrown out. I have nowhere to go." The girl barely managed a whisper. "Don't let anyone see me. Take me out when it gets dark and throw me back in the river."

"She has spoken to me! But what a terrible thing to say. Why must you say such things? And why were you out there all by yourself?"

The girl did not answer. The nun examined her for wounds, but found none. Such a pretty little thing—but there was a certain apprehension mingled with the pity and sorrow. Might a strange apparition have been dispatched to tempt her, to challenge her calm?

The party remained in seclusion for two days, during which prayers and incantations went on without pause. Everyone was asking who this unusual person might be.

Certain farmers in the neighborhood who had once been in the service of the bishop came to pay their respects.

"There has been a big commotion over at the prince's place," one of them remarked by way of apology. "The General of the Right was seeing the prince's daughter, and then all of a sudden she died, of no sickness at all that anyone could see. We couldn't come yesterday evening when we heard Your Reverence was here. We had to help with the funeral."

So that was it. Some demon had abducted the Eighth Prince's daughter. It scarcely seemed to the bishop that he had been looking at a live human being. There was something sinister about the girl, as if she might at any moment dissolve into thin air.

"The fire last night hardly seemed big enough for a funeral."

"No, it wasn't much to look at. They made it as small as they could." The visitors had been asked to remain outside lest they communicate the defilement.

"But who might it be? The prince's daughter, you say—but the princess the general was fond of has been dead for some years. He has another princess now, and he is not the sort to go out looking for new wives."

The old nun was better and the stars no longer blocked the way. Everything that had happened made them want to leave these inhospitable precincts as soon as possible.

"But the young lady is still very weak," someone objected. "Do you really think she can travel?"

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They had two carriages. The old nun and two others were in the first and the girl was in the second, with an attendant.[405] They moved at an easy pace with frequent stops. The nuns were from Ono, at the west foot of Mount Hiei. It was very late when they arrived, so exhausted that they regretted not having spent another night along the way. The bishop helped his mother out. With many pauses, the younger nun led the girl into the nunnery. It was a sore trial to have lived so long, the old nun, near collapse, was no doubt saying to herself. The bishop waited until she had recovered somewhat and made his way back up the mountain. Because it had not been proper company for a cleric to find himself in, he kept the story to himself. The younger nun, his sister, also enjoined silence, and was very uneasy lest someone come inquiring after the girl. Why should they have found her all alone in such an unlikely place? Had a malicious stepmother taken advantage of an illness in the course of a pilgrimage, perhaps, and left her by the wayside? "Throw me back in the river," she had said, and there had been not a word from her since. The nun was deeply troubled. She did so want to see the girl restored to health, but the girl did not seem up to the smallest effort in her own behalf. Perhaps it was, after all, a hopeless case—but the very thought of giving up brought a new access of sorrow. Secretly requesting the presence of the disciple who had offered up the first prayers, the nun told of her dream at Hatsuse and asked that ritual fires be lighted.

And so the Fourth and Fifth months passed. Concluding sadly that her labors had been useless, the nun sent off a pleading letter to her brother: "May I ask that you come down and see what you can do for her? I tell myself that if she had been fated to die she would not have lived this long; and yet whatever has taken possession of her refuses to be dislodged. I would not dream, my sainted brother, of asking that you set foot in the city; but surely it will do you no harm to come this far."

All very curious, thought the bishop. The girl seemed destined to live—in that matter he had to agree with his sister. And what then would have happened if they had left her at Uji? All that could be affirmed was that a legacy from former lives had dictated a certain course of events. He must do what he could, and if then she died, he could only conclude that her destiny had worked itself out.

Overjoyed to see him, the nun told of all that happened over the months. "A long illness generally shows itself on a person's face; but she is as fresh and pretty as ever she was." She was weeping copiously. "So very many times she has seemed on the point of death, and still she has lived on."

"You are right." He looked down at the girl. "She is very pretty indeed. I did think all along that there was something unusual about her. Well, let's see what we can do. She brought a store of grace with her from other lives, we can be

405. The commentators are agreed that the bishop's sister is in the second carriage.

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sure of that. I wonder what miscalculation might have reduced her to this. Has anything come to you that might offer a clue?"

"She has not said a word. Our Lady of Hatsuse brought her to me."

"Everything has its cause. Something in another life brought her to you."

Still deeply perplexed, he began his prayers. He had imposed upon himself so strict a regimen that he refused to emerge from the mountains even on royal command, and it would not do to be found in ministrations for which there was no very compelling reason.

He told his disciples of his doubts. "You must say nothing to anyone. I am a dissolute monk who has broken his vows over and over again, but not once have I sullied myself with a woman. Ah, well. Some people reveal their predilections when they are past sixty, and if I prove to be one of them, I shall call it fate."

"Oh, consider for a moment, Your Reverence." His disciples were more upset than he was. "Think what harm you would be doing the Good Law if you were to let ignorant oafs spread rumors."

Steeling himself for the trials ahead, the bishop committed himself silently to vows extreme even for him. He must not fail. All through the night he was lost in spells and incantations, and at dawn the malign spirit in possession of the girl transferred itself to a medium.

Assisted now by his favorite disciple, the bishop tried all manner of spells toward identifying the source of the trouble; and finally the spirit, hidden for so long, was forced to announce itself.

"You think it is this I have come for?" it shouted. "No, no. I was once a monk myself, and I obeyed all the rules; but I took away a grudge that kept me tied to the world, and I wandered here and wandered there, and found a house full of beautiful girls. One of them died, and this one wanted to die too. She said so, every day and every night. I saw my chance and took hold of her one dark night when she was alone. But Our Lady of Hatsuse was on her side through it all, and now I have lost out to His Reverence. I shall leave you."[406]

"Who is that addressing us?"

But the medium was tiring rapidly and no more information was forthcoming.

The girl was now resting comfortably. Though not yet fully conscious, she looked up and saw ugly, twisted old people, none of whom she recognized. She was assailed by intense loneliness, like a castaway on a foreign shore. Vague, ill-formed images floated up from the past, but she could not remember where she had lived or who she was. She had reached the end of the way, and she had flung herself in—but where was she now? She thought and thought, and

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406. It is not that the possession caused Ukifune's unhappiness but that the unhappiness gave the possessing spirit its opportunity.

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was aware of terrible sorrows. Everyone had been asleep, she had opened the corner doors and gone out. The wind was high and the waters were roaring savagely. She sat trembling on the veranda. What should she do? Where was she to go now? To go back inside would be to rob everything of meaning. She must destroy herself. "Come, evil spirits, devour me. Do not leave me to be discovered alive." As she sat hunched against the veranda, her mind in a turmoil, a very handsome man came up and announced that she was to go with him, and (she seemed to remember) took her in his arms. It would be Prince Niou, she said to herself.

And what had happened then? He carried her to a very strange place and disappeared. She remembered weeping bitterly at her failure to keep her resolve, and she could remember nothing more. Judging from what these people were saying, many days had passed. What a sodden heap she must have been when they found her! Why had she been forced against her wishes to live on?

She had eaten little through the long trance, and now she would not take even a drop of medicine.

"You do seem bent on destroying all my hopes," said the younger nun, the bishop's sister, not for a moment leaving her side. "Just when I was beginning to think the worst might be over. Your temperature has gone down—you were running a fever all those weeks—and you seemed a little more yourself."

Everyone in the house was delighted with her and quite unconditionally at her service. What happiness for them all that they had rescued her! The girl wanted to die; but the indications were that life had a stubborn hold on her. She began to take a little nourishment. Strangely, she continued to lose weight.

"Please let me be one of you," she said to the nun, who was ecstatic at the prospect of a full recovery. "Then I can go on living. But not otherwise."

"But you are so young and so pretty. How could you possibly want to become a nun?"

The bishop administered token orders, cutting a lock of hair and enjoining obedience to the five commandments.[407] Though she was not satisfied with these half measures, she was an unassertive girl and she could not bring herself to ask more.

"We shall go no further at the moment," said the bishop, leaving for his mountain cell. "Do take care of yourself. Get your strength back."

For his sister, these events were like a dream. She urged the girl to her feet and dressed her hair, surprisingly untangled after months of neglect, and fresh and lustrous once it had been combed out its full length. In this companionship of ladies "but one year short of a hundred,"[408] she was like an angel that had wandered down from the heavens and might choose at any moment to return.

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407. Against killing, stealing, wantonness, deceit, and drunkenness.

408. In *The Tales of Ise*, sec. 63, the hero is pursued by a lady "but one year short of a hundred."

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"You do seem so cool and distant," said the nun. "Have you no idea what you mean to me? Who are you, where are you from, why were you there?"

"I don't remember," the girl answered softly. "Everything seems to have left me. It was all so strange. I just don't remember. I sat out near the veranda every evening, that I do half remember. I kept looking out, and wishing I could go away. A man came from a huge tree just in front of me, and I rather think he took me off. And that is all I remember. I don't even know my name." There were tears in her eyes. "Don't let anyone know I am still alive. Please. That would only make things worse."

Since it appeared that she found these attempts at conversation tiring, the nun did not press further. The whole sequence of events was as singular as the story of the old bamboo cutter and the moon princess,[409] and the nun was uneasy lest a moment of inattention give the girl her chance to slip away.

The bishop's mother was a lady of good rank. The younger nun was the widow of a high-ranking courtier. Her only daughter, who had been her whole life, had married another well-placed courtier and died shortly afterward; and so the woman had lost interest in the world, taken the nun's habit, and withdrawn to these hills. Yet feelings of loneliness and deprivation lingered on. She yearned for a companion to remind her of the one now gone. And she had come upon a hidden treasure, a girl if anything superior to her daughter. Yes, it was all very strange—unbelievably, joyously strange. The nun was aging but still handsome and elegant. The waters here were far gentler than at that other mountain village. The house was pleasingly furnished, the trees and shrubs had been set out to agreeable effect, and great care had obviously gone into the flower beds. As autumn wore on, the skies somehow brought a deepened awareness of the passing days. The young maidservants, making as if to join the rice harvesters at the gate, raised their voices in harvest songs, and the clacking of the scarecrows[410] brought memories of a girlhood in the remote East Country.

The house was set in against the eastern hills, some distance above the retreat of Kashiwagi's late mother-in-law, consort of the Suzaku emperor. The pines were thick and the winds were lonely. Life in the nunnery was quiet, with only religious observances to break the monotony. On moonlit nights the bishop's sister would sometimes take out a koto and a nun called Shōshō would join in with a lute.

"Do you play?" they would ask the girl. "You must be bored."

As she watched these elderly people beguiling the tedium with music, she thought of her own lot. Never from the outset had she been among those privileged to seek consolation in quiet, tasteful pleasures; and so she had grown

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409. Kaguyahime, in the tenth-century *Tale of the Bamboo Cutter*, returns to the moon at the end of the story.

410. *Hita* are clappers of wood and bamboo manipulated from a distance by a string.

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to womanhood with not a single accomplishment to boast of. Her stars had not been kind to her. She took up a brush and, by way of writing practice, set down a poem:

> "Into a torrent of tears I flung myself,
> and who put up the sluice that held me back?"

It had been cruel of them to save her. The future filled her with dread. On these moonlit nights the old women would recite courtly poems and talk of this and that ancient happening, and she would be left alone with her thoughts.

> "Who in the city, now bathed in the light of the moon,
> will know that I yet drift on through the gloomy world?"

Many people had been in her last thoughts—or what she had meant to be her last thoughts—but they were nothing to her now. There was only her mother, who must have been shattered by the news. And Nurse, so desperate to find a decent life for her—how desolate she must be, poor thing! Where would she be now? She could not know, of course, that the girl was still alive. Then there was Ukon, who had shared all her secrets through the terrible days when no one else had understood.

It is not easy for young people to tell the world goodbye and withdraw to a mountain village, and the only women permanently in attendance were seven or eight aged nuns. Their daughters and granddaughters, married or in domestic service, would sometimes come visiting. The girl avoided these callers, for among them might be one or two who frequented the houses of the gentlemen she had known. It seemed absolutely essential that her existence remain a secret, and no doubt strange theories about her origins were going the rounds. The younger nun assigned two of her own maidservants, Jijū and Komoki, to wait upon the girl. They were a far cry from the "birds of the capital"[411] she had known in her other life. Had she found for herself the "place apart from the world" the poet speaks of?[412] The bishop's sister knew that such extreme reserve must have profound causes, and told no one of the Uji events.

Her son-in-law was now a guards captain. His younger brother, a court chaplain and a disciple of the bishop, was in seclusion at Yokawa. Members of the family often went to visit him. Once on his way up the mountain the captain stopped by Ono. Outrunners cleared the road, and the elegant young

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411. In the ninth episode of *The Tales of Ise*, the exiled hero is reminded of home by the *miyakodori* (bird of the capital), the black-headed gull.

412. Anonymous, *Shūishū*, no. 506: "Would I might have a place apart from the world, there to hide what time has done to me."

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gentleman who now approached brought back to the girl, so vividly that it might have been he, the image of her clandestine visitor. Ono was little nearer the center of things than Uji, but the nunnery and its grounds showed that the occupants were ladies of taste. Wild carnations coyly dotted the hedge, and maiden flowers and bellflowers were coming into bloom; and among them stood numbers of young men in bright and varied travel dress. The captain, also in travel dress, was received at the south veranda. He stood for a time admiring the garden. Perhaps twenty-seven or twenty-eight, he seemed mature for his age. The nun, his mother-in-law, addressed him through a curtained doorway.

"The years go by and those days seem far away. It is good of you to remember that the darkness of our mountains awaits your radiant presence. And yet—" There were tears in her voice. "And yet I am surprised, I must admit, that you so favor us."

"I have not for a moment forgotten the old days; but I fear I have rather neglected you now that you are no longer among us. I envy my brother his mountain life and would like to visit him every day. But crowds of people are always wanting to come with me. Today I managed to shake them off."

"I am not at all sure that I believe you. You are saying what young people say. But of course you have not forgotten us, and that is evidence that you are not like the rest of them. I thank you for it, you may be sure, every day of the year."

She had a light lunch brought for the men and offered the captain lotus seeds and other delicacies. Since this was of course not the first time she had been his hostess, he saw no cause for reticence. The talk of old times might have gone on longer had a sudden shower not come up. For the nun, regret was added to sorrow, regret that so fine a young man had been allowed to become a stranger. Why had her daughter not left behind a child, a keepsake? Quite lost in the nostalgia these occasional visits induced, she sometimes said things she might better have kept to herself.

Looking out into the garden, alone once again with her thoughts, the girl was pathetic and yet beautiful in the white singlet, a plain, coarse garment, and drab, lusterless trousers in harmony with the subdued tones of the nunnery. What an unhappy contrast she must be with what she had once been! In fact, even these stiff, shapeless garments became her.

"Here we have our dead lady back, you might almost think," said one of the women; "and here we have the captain too. It makes you want to weep, it really does. People will marry, one way and another, and it would be so nice if we could have him back for good. Wouldn't they make a handsome couple, though."

No, never, the girl replied silently. She had no wish to return to the past, and the attentions of a man, any man, would inevitably pull her toward it. She had been there, and she would have no more of it.

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The nun having withdrawn, the captain sat looking apprehensively up at the sky. He recognized the voice of the nun Shōshō and called her to him.

"I am sure that all the ladies I knew are here, but you can probably imagine how hard it is for me to visit you. You must have concluded that I am completely undependable."

They talked of the past, on and on, for Shōshō had been in the dead lady's service.

"Just as I was coming in from the gallery," he said, "a gust of wind caught the blind, and I was treated to a glimpse of some really beautiful hair. What sort of damsel do you have hidden away in your nunnery?"

He had seen the retreating figure of the girl and found her interesting. How much more dramatic the effect would certainly be if he were to have a good look at her. He still grieved for a lady who was much the girl's inferior.

"Our lady was quite unable to forget her daughter, your own lady, and nothing seemed to console her. Then quite by accident she came on another girl, and she seems to have recovered somewhat from her grief. But it is not at all like the girl to have let you see her."

Now this was interesting, thought the captain. Who might she be? That single glimpse, a most tantalizing one, had assured him that she was well favored. He questioned Shōshō further, but her answers were evasive. . . .

Just as the moon came flooding over the hills the captain appeared. (There had been that note from him earlier in the day.) The girl fled aghast to the rear of the house.

"You are being a perfect fool," said Shōshō.[413] "It is the sort of night when a girl should treasure these little attentions. Do, I beg of you, at least hear what he has to say—or even a part of it. Are you so clean that his very words will soil you?"

But the girl was terrified. Though someone ventured to tell him that she was away, he probably knew the truth. Probably his messenger had reported that she was alone.

His recriminations were lengthy. "I don't care whether or not I hear her voice. I just want to have her beside me, prepared to decide for herself whether I am such an ugly threat. She is being quite heartless, and in these hills too, where it might be imagined that there would be time to cultivate the virtue of patient charity. It is more than a man should be asked to bear.

> "In a mountain village, deep in the autumn night,
> a lady who understands should understand.

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413. Probably it is she, though no subject is given.

Материал, защитен с авторско право

"And I do think she should."

"There is no one here to make your explanations for you," said Shōshō to the girl. "You may if you are not careful seem rude and eccentric."

> "The gloom of the world has been no part of my life,
> and how shall you call me one who understands?"

The girl recited the poem more as if to herself than by way of reply, but Shōshō passed it on to him.

He was deeply touched. "Do ask her again to come out, for a moment, even."

"I seem to make no impression upon her at all," said Shōshō, who was beginning to find his persistence, and with it a certain querulousness, a little tiresome. She went back inside—and found that the girl had fled to the old nun's room, which she had not before so much as looked in upon.

Shōshō reported this astonishing development.

"With all this time on her hands," said the captain, "she should be more than usually alive to the pity of things, and all the indications are that she is a gentle and sensitive enough person. And that very fact, you know, makes her unfriendliness cut more cruelly. Do you suppose there is something in her past, something that has made her afraid of men? What might it be, will you tell me, please, that has turned her against the whole world? And how long do you expect to have her with you?"

Openly curious now, he pressed for details; but how was Shōshō to give them?

"A lady whom my lady should by rights have been looking after was lost for a number of years. And then, on a pilgrimage to Hatsuse, we found her again."

The girl lay face down, sleepless, beside the old nun, whom she had heard to be a very difficult person. The nun had dozed off from early evening, and now she was snoring thunderously. With her were two nuns as old as she, snoring with equal vigor. Terrified, the girl half wondered whether she would survive the night. Might not these monsters devour her? Though she had no great wish to live on, she was timid by nature, rather like the one we have all heard of who has set out across a log bridge and then changed her mind.[414] She had brought the girl Komoki with her. Of an impressionable age, however, Komoki had soon returned to a spot whence she could observe this rare and most attractive caller. Would she not please come back, would she not please come back? Ukifune was asking; but Komoki was little help in a crisis.

The captain presently gave up the struggle and departed.

"She is so hopelessly wrapped up in herself," said the women, "and the worst of it is that she is so pretty."

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414. A reference, apparently, to a story or proverb, not identified.

Материал, защитен с авторско право

At what the girl judged would be about midnight the old nun awoke in a fit of coughing and sat up. In the lamplight her hair was white against her shawl.

Startled to find the girl beside her, she shaded her eyes with her hand as the mink (or some such creature) is said to do[415] and peered over.

"Now this is strange," she said in a deep, menacing voice. "What sort of thing might you be?"

The moment had come, thought the girl. She was going to be devoured. When that malign being had led her off she had not resisted, for she had not had her senses about her. But what was she to do now? They had dragged her ignominiously back into the world, and black memories were a constant torment; and now came a new crisis, one which she seemed incapable of surmounting or even facing. Yet perhaps if she had had her way, if she had died, she would this moment be facing a crisis still more terrible. Sleepless, she thought back over her life, which seemed utterly bleak. She had not known her father and she had divided all those years between the capital and the remote provinces. And then she had come upon her sister. For a time she had been happy and secure; but that untoward incident had separated them. Some relief from her misfortunes had seemed in prospect when a gentleman declared himself ready to offer her a respectable position, and she had responded to his attentions with that hideous blunder. It had been wrong to permit even the smallest flutter of affection for Niou. The memory of her ultimate disgrace, brought on by his attentions, revolted her. What idiocy, to have been moved by his pledge and that Islet of Oranges and the pretty poem it had inspired![416] Her mind moved from incident to incident, and longing flowed over her for the other gentleman. He had not exactly burned with ardor, but he had seemed calm and dependable. From him above all she wanted to keep news of her whereabouts and circumstances. Would she be allowed another glimpse of him, even from a distance? But she sternly dismissed the thought. It was wrong. She must not harbor it for a moment.

After what had seemed an endless night, she heard a cock crowing. It was an immense relief—but how much greater a delight had it been her mother's voice awakening her! Komoki was still absent from her post. The girl lay in bed, exhausted. The early snorers were also early risers, it seemed. They were noisily at work on gruel and other unappetizing dishes. Someone offered her a helping, but the donor was ugly and the food strange and unappetizing. She was not feeling well, she said, not venturing an open refusal. The old women did not sense that their hospitality was unwelcome.

Several monks of low rank came up to the nunnery. "The bishop will be calling on you today."

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415. The mink was believed to shade its eyes while scanning a stranger from afar.

416. A reference to the poem that Niou sent to Ukifune during the romantic excursion to the Islet of Oranges in the "A Boat upon the Waters" chapter.

Материал, защитен с авторско право

"What brings him so suddenly?"

"An evil spirit of some sort has been after the First Princess. The archbishop[417] has been doing what he can, but two messengers came yesterday to say that only His Reverence offers real hope." They delivered these tidings in proud voices. "Then late last night the lieutenant came, the son of the Minister of the Left, you know.[418] He had a message from Her Majesty herself. And so His Reverence will be coming down the mountain."

She must summon up her courage, thought the girl, and have the bishop administer final vows. Today there were no meddling women to gainsay them. "I fear I am very ill," she said, rousing herself, "and when he comes I hope I may ask him to let me take my vows. Would you tell him so, please?"

The old nun nodded vaguely.

The girl went back to her room. She did not like the thought of having anyone except the bishop's sister touch her hair, and she could not dress it without help. She loosened the cords that had bound it up for the night. Though of course she had no one but herself to blame for what was about to happen, she was sad that her mother would not see her again in lay dress. She had feared that her hair might be thinner because of her illness, but could detect no evidence that it was. Remarkably thick, indeed, it was a good six feet long, soft and smooth and beautifully even at the edges.

"I cannot think," she whispered to herself, "that she would have wished it thus."[419]

The bishop arrived in the evening. The south room had been readied for him. Suddenly full of shaven heads, it was an even less inviting room than usual. The bishop went to look in on his mother.

"And how have you been these last months? I am told that my good sister is off on a pilgrimage. And is the girl still with you?"

"Oh, yes. She didn't go along. She says, let me see, she's not feeling well. She'd like to take her vows, she says, and she'd like you to give them to her."

"I see." He went to the girl's room and addressed her through curtains. Shyly, she came forward.

"I have felt that only a bond from a previous life could explain the curious way we met, and I have been praying my hardest for you. But I am afraid that as a correspondent I have not been very satisfactory. You will understand, I am sure, that we clerics are supposed to deny ourselves such pleasures unless we have very good reasons. And how have you been? It is not an easy life women lead when they turn their backs on the world."

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417. Zasu, the chief abbot of Mount Hiei.

418. One of Yūgiri's sons and thus a first cousin of the princess.

419. Henjō, *Gosenshū*, no. 1241, upon taking holy orders: "I cannot think that she would have wished it thus, My aged mother, stroking my raven hair."

Материал, защитен с авторско право

"You will remember that I had no wish to live on, and my strange survival has only brought me grief. But of course I am grateful, in my poor way, for all you have done. Do, please, let me take my vows. I do not think I am capable of the sort of life other women lead. Even if I were to stay among them, I do not think I could follow their example."

"What can have brought you to such a conclusion, when you have your whole life ahead of you? No, it would be a grave sin. The decision may at the time seem a firm one, but women are irresolute creatures, and time goes by."

"I have never been happy, not since I was very young, and my mother often thought of putting me in a nunnery. And when I began to understand things a little better I could see that I was different from other people, and must seek my happiness in another world." She was weeping. "Perhaps it is because I am so near the end of it all—I feel as if everything were slipping away. Please, reverend sir, let me take my vows."

The bishop was puzzled. Why should so gentle a surface conceal such a strange, bitter resolve? But he remembered that malign spirit and knew that she would not be talking nonsense. It was remarkable that she was still alive. A terrible thing, a truly hideous thing, to be accosted by forces so evil.

"Your wish can only have gained for you the smiling approval of the powers above. It is not for me to deter you. Nothing could be simpler than administering vows. But I have come down on most pressing business, and must tonight be at the princess's side. The services begin tomorrow. In a week they will be over, and I shall see that your petition is granted."

But by then the younger nun would have come back, and she would surely object. It must be made to appear that the crisis was immediate.

"Perhaps I have not explained how unwell I am. I fear that vows will do me little good if I am beyond accepting them wholeheartedly. Please. I see my chance today, the only one I shall be blessed with."

Her weeping had touched his saintly heart. "It is very late. I used to have no trouble at all climbing up and down the mountain, but I am old, and matters are no longer so simple. I had thought to rest here awhile and then go on to the city. If you are in such a hurry, I shall see to your wishes immediately."

Delighted, the girl pushed scissors and a comb box toward him.

"Have the others come here, please." The two monks who had been with him that strange night at Uji were with him again tonight. "Cut the young lady's hair, if you will."

It was a most proper thing they were doing, they agreed. Given the perilous situation in which they had found her, they knew that she could have been meant for no ordinary life. But the bishop's favored disciple hesitated even as he raised the scissors. The hair pushed forward between the curtains was altogether too beautiful.

The nun Shōshō was off in another wing with her brother, a prefect who had come with the bishop. Saemon too was having a chat with a friend in the

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party; and such modest entertainment as they were capable of providing for these rare and most welcome visitors occupied most of the household.

Only Komoki was present. She scampered off to tell Shōshō what was in progress. A dismayed Shōshō rushed in just as the bishop was going through the form of bestowing his own robe and surplice upon the girl.

"You must now make obeisance, if you will, in the direction of your father and mother."

The girl was in tears, for she did not know in which direction that would be.

"And what, may I ask, are you doing? You are being utterly irresponsible. I cannot think what our lady will have to say when she gets back."

But the proceedings were at a point beyond which expressions of doubt could only disturb the girl. Shōshō said no more.

" . . . as we wander the three worlds,"[420] intoned the bishop.

So, at length, came release. Yet the girl felt a twinge of sorrow: there had in fact been no bonds to break.

The bishop's assistant was having trouble with her hair. "Oh, well. The others will have time to trim it for you."

"You must admit no regrets for the step you have taken," said the bishop, himself cutting the hair at her forehead. He added other noble admonitions.

She was happy now. They had all advised deliberation, and she had had her way. She could claim this one sign of the Buddha's favor, her single reward for having lived on in this dark world.

The visitors left, all was quiet. "We had thought that for you at least," said her companions, to the moaning of the night wind, "this lonely life need not go on. We had looked forward to seeing you happy again. And this has happened. Have you thought of all the years that lie ahead of you? It is not easy for even an old woman to tell herself that life as most people know it has ended."

But the girl was serene. "Life as most people know it"—she need no longer think about that. Waves of peace flowed over her.

But the next morning she avoided their eyes, for she had acted selfishly and taken no account of their wishes. Her hair seemed to scatter wildly at the ends, and no one was prepared to dress it for her in charitable silence. She kept her curtains drawn.

She had never been an articulate girl, and she had no confidante with whom to discuss the rights and wrongs of what had happened. She seated herself at her inkstone and turned to the one pursuit in which she could lose herself when her thoughts were more than she could bear, her writing practice.

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420. Although the text from which the bishop is reciting has been lost, the reference would seem to be to the cycle of birth and rebirth.

Bahan dengan hak cipta

"A world I once renounced, for they and I
had come to nothing, I now renounce again.

"Finally, this time, I have done it."
The poem moved her to set down another:

"I thought that I should see the world no more,
and now, once more, 'no more' is my resolve."

The captain is disappointed to discover that the beautiful woman who has been hidden away among the elderly nuns has taken holy vows and is no longer within his reach. Meanwhile, the bishop visits the empress and informs her of the discovery of the mysterious woman at Uji. The empress realizes that the woman is the lover whom her brother Kaoru had lost and who is now presumed dead. Kosaishō, a female attendant to the empress, conveys this information to Kaoru, who is astounded.

"It sounds very much like someone I had been wondering about," Kaoru replied guardedly. "And is she still at Ono?"

"The bishop administered vows the day he came down from the mountain. She insisted on it, even though everyone wanted her to wait until she had regained a little of her strength."

The place was right, and not one of the circumstances was at variance with what he knew. Half hoping he would be spared the knowledge that it was indeed she, he cast about for a way to learn the truth. He would present an awkward figure if he were to lead the hunt himself. And if he were to treat Niou to the sight of his restlessness, his friend would no doubt seek ways to block the path the girl had chosen. Had Niou extracted a vow of silence from his mother? That would explain her curious reluctance to talk about a matter so extraordinary. And if Niou was already part of the conspiracy, then however strong the yearning, Kaoru must once again consign Ukifune to the realm of the dead. If indeed she still lived, then some chance turn of the wind might one day bring them together, to talk, perhaps, of the shores of the Yellow Spring.[421] He would not again think of making her his own.

Though the empress was evidently determined not to discuss these events, he found another occasion to seek her out.

"The girl I told you about, the one who I thought had died such a terrible death—I have heard that she is still alive. She has come on unhappy circumstances, I am told. It all seems very unlikely—but then the way she disappeared was unlikely too. I find it hard to believe that she hated the world enough to

421. Yomi, Land of the Dead.

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think of such desperate measures. And so the rumors I have picked up may not be so unlikely after all." And he described them in more detail. He chose his words carefully when they touched upon Niou, and he did not speak at all of his own bitterness. "If he hears that I would like to find her he is sure to credit me with all the wrong motives. I do not propose to do anything even if I discover that she is still alive."

"I was rather frightened when I had the story from the bishop, and did not listen as carefully as I should have. But how could my son possibly have learned of it? I know all about his deplorable habits, and have no doubt that news of this sort would send him into a fever. The talk I pick up about his little escapades worries me terribly."

He knew that she would never, in what seemed to be the frankest of conversations, let slip something she had learned in confidence.

The mystery haunted him, day and night. In what mountain village would the girl be? How might he with dignity seek her out? He must have the facts directly from the bishop of Yokawa. He made solemn offerings on the eighth of every month, sometimes at the main hall on Mount Hiei, sacred to Lord Yakushi.[422] This time he would go on to Yokawa. He took the girl's brother with him. He did not mean to tell her family for the moment, not until he had more precise information. Perhaps he hoped that the boy's presence would bring an immediacy to an encounter that might otherwise seem unreal. If the girl in the bishop's story should indeed prove to be Ukifune, and if, further, she had already been the victim of improper advances, even in strange new dress, off among strange new women—the truth would not be pleasing.

Such are the thoughts that troubled him along the way.

[Translated by Edward Seidensticker]

MURASAKI SHIKIBU'S DIARY (*MURASAKI SHIKIBU NIKKI*, 1010)

Murasaki Shikibu's Diary belongs to the genre of kana diaries by court ladies-in-waiting (*nyōbō*) who wrote diaries that honored their royal patrons, and in this sense it resembles Sei Shōnagon's *Pillow Book*, which pays homage to Empress Teishi. *Murasaki Shikibu's Diary* differs significantly from such literary diaries as the *Kagerō Diary* and the *Sarashina Diary*, which were written by middle-rank aristocratic women who were largely outside the court. At least half of Murasaki Shikibu's diary is devoted to a long-awaited event in the career of her patron Michinaga—the birth of a son, Prince Atsuhira, to Empress Shōshi in the Ninth Month of 1008—an event that Murasaki Shikibu records in lavish detail. Three years later, the boy was designated crown prince and in 1016 became Emperor Go-Ichijō (r. 1016–1036), making Michinaga a maternal

422. Bhaisajyaguru, the buddha of medicine. The eighth of the month was one of his feast days.

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grandfather to an emperor. Murasaki Shikibu was thus witness to one of Michinaga's glorious moments. She was not, however, completely enthralled by the splendor of the court and reveals a certain alienation and critical distance, an ambivalence that also is evident in *The Tale of Genji*.

According to her diary, Fujiwara no Kintō once asked her in a moment of inebriation, "Excuse me, but is the young Murasaki hereabouts?" thus playfully associating the lady-in-waiting with her work and its young heroine. This passage also indicates that at least part of *The Tale of Genji* had been completed by the Eleventh Month of 1008. The last part of *Murasaki Shikibu's Diary*, which is written in a personal, epistolary style, echoes the Uji chapters in revealing the difficulty of taking holy vows and attaining salvation. Indeed, the texts' close tonal resemblance has convinced some scholars that Murasaki Shikibu wrote the last ten chapters of *The Tale of Genji* shortly before or after finishing *Murasaki Shikibu's Diary* in 1010. The following passage reveals Murasaki Shikibu's attitude toward her literary rivals, particularly Sei Shōnagon; provides insights into her court life; and expresses her thoughts about future salvation.

Sei Shōnagon, for instance, was dreadfully conceited. She thought herself so clever and littered her writings with Chinese characters; but if you examined them closely, they left a great deal to be desired. Those who think of themselves as being superior to everyone else in this way will inevitably suffer and come to a bad end, and people who have become so precious that they go out of their way to be sensitive in the most unpromising situations, trying to capture every moment of interest, however slight, are bound to look ridiculous and superficial. How can the future turn out well for them?

Thus do I criticize others from various angles—but here is one who has survived this far without having achieved anything of note. I have nothing to look forward to in the future that might afford her the slightest consolation, but I am not the kind of person to abandon herself completely to despair. And yet, by the same token, I cannot entirely rid myself of such feelings. On autumn evenings, which positively encourage nostalgia, when I go out to sit on the veranda and gaze, I seem to be always conjuring up visions of the past—"And did they praise the beauty of this moon of yore?" Knowing full well that I am inviting the kind of misfortune one should avoid, I become uneasy and move inside a little, while still, of course, continuing to recall the past.

And when I play my *koto* rather badly to myself in the cool breeze of the evening, I worry lest someone might hear me and recognize how I am just "adding to the sadness of it all"; how vain and sad of me. So now both my instruments, one of thirteen strings and the other of six, stand in a miserable little closet still ready-strung. Through neglect—I forgot, for example, to ask that the bridges be removed on rainy days—they have accumulated dust and lean there against a cupboard. Two *biwa* stand on either side, their necks jammed between the cupboard and a pillar.

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There is also a pair of large cupboards crammed full to the bursting point. One is full of old poems and tales that have become the home for countless insects which scatter in such an unpleasant manner that no one cares to look at them any more; the other is full of Chinese books that have lain unattended ever since he who carefully collected them passed away. Whenever my loneliness threatens to overwhelm me, I take out one or two of them to look at; but my women gather together behind my back. "It's because she goes on like this that she is so miserable. What kind of lady is it who reads Chinese books?" they whisper. "In the past it was not even the done thing to read sutras!" "Yes," I feel like replying, "but I've never seen anyone who lived longer just because they believed in superstitions!" But that would be thoughtless of me. There is some truth in what they say.

Each one of us is quite different. Some are confident, open and forthcoming. Others are born pessimists, amused by nothing, the kind who search through old letters, carry out penances, intone sutras without end, and clack their beads, all of which makes me uncomfortable. So I hesitate to do even those things I should be able to do quite freely, only too aware of my own servants' prying eyes. How much more so at court, where I do have many things I would like to say but always think better of it, because there would be no point. I cannot be bothered to discuss matters in front of those women who continually carp and are so full of themselves; it would only cause trouble. It is so rare to find someone of true understanding; for the most part they judge everything by their own standards and ignore everyone else.

So all they see of me is a facade. There are times when I am forced to sit with them and on such occasions I simply ignore their petty criticisms, not because I am particularly shy but because I consider it pointless. As a result, they now look upon me as a dullard.

"Well, we never expected this!" they all say. "No one liked her. They all said she was pretentious, awkward, difficult to approach, prickly, too fond of her tales, haughty, prone to versifying, disdainful, cantankerous, and scornful. But when you meet her, she is strangely meek, a completely different person altogether!"

How embarrassing! Do they really look upon me as such a dull thing, I wonder? But I am what I am. Her Majesty has also remarked more than once that she had thought I was not the kind of person with whom she could ever relax, but that now I have become closer to her than any of the others. I am so perverse and standoffish. If only I can avoid putting off those for whom I have genuine regard.

To be pleasant, gentle, calm and self-possessed: this is the basis of good taste and charm in a woman. No matter how amorous or passionate you may be, as long as you are straightforward and refrain from causing others embarrassment, no one will mind. But women who are too vain and act pretentiously, to the extent that they make others feel uncomfortable, will themselves become the

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object of attention; and once that happens, people will find fault with whatever they say or do; whether it be how they enter a room, how they sit down, how they stand up or how they take their leave. Those who end up contradicting themselves and those who disparage their companions are also carefully watched and listened to all the more. As long as you are free from such faults, people will surely refrain from listening to tittle-tattle and will want to show you sympathy, if only for the sake of politeness.

I am of the opinion that when you intentionally cause hurt to another, or indeed if you do ill through mere thoughtless behavior, you fully deserve to be censured in public. Some people are so good-natured that they can still care for those who despise them, but I myself find it very difficult. Did the Buddha himself in all his compassion ever preach that one should simply ignore those who slander the Three Treasures? How in this sullied world of ours can those who are hard done by be expected to reciprocate in kind? And yet people react in very different ways. Some glare at each other face to face and fling abuse in an attempt to gain the upper hand; others hide their true intent and appear quite friendly on the surface—thus are true natures revealed.

There is a woman called Saemon no Naishi, who, for some strange reason, took a dislike to me. I heard all sorts of malicious, unfounded rumors about myself.

His Majesty was listening to someone reading *The Tale of Genji* aloud. "She must have read the *Chronicles of Japan*!" he said. "She seems very learned." Saemon no Naishi suddenly jumped to conclusions and spread it abroad among the senior courtiers that I was flaunting my learning. She gave me the nickname Lady Chronicle. How very comical! Would I, who hesitate to reveal my learning in front of my own servants at home, ever think of doing so at court?

When my brother, Secretary at the Ministry of Ceremonial, was a young boy learning the Chinese classics, I was in the habit of listening to him and I became unusually proficient at understanding those passages that he found too difficult to grasp and memorize. Father, a most learned man, was always regretting the fact: "Just my luck!" he would say. "What a pity she was not born a man!" But then gradually I realized that people were saying, "It's bad enough when a man flaunts his learning; she will come to no good," and ever since then I have avoided writing even the simplest character. My handwriting is appalling. And as for those classics, or whatever they are called, that I used to read, I gave them up entirely. And still I kept on hearing these remarks; so in the end, worried what people would think if they heard such rumors, I pretended to be unable to read even the inscriptions on the screens. Then Her Majesty asked me to read to her here and there from the *Collected Works of Bo Juyi*, and, because she evinced a desire to know more about such things, we carefully chose a time when other women would not be present and, from the summer before last, I started to give her informal lessons on the two volumes of the "New Ballads." I hid this fact from the others, as did Her Majesty, but

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somehow both His Excellency and His Majesty got wind of it and they had some beautiful copies made of various Chinese books, which His Excellency then presented to Her Majesty. That gossip Saemon no Naishi could never have found out that Her Majesty had actually asked me to study with her, for, if she had she done so, I would never have heard the last of it. Ah what a prattling, tiresome world it is!

Why should I hesitate to say what I want to? Whatever others might say, I intend to immerse myself in reading sutras for Amida Buddha. Since I have lost what little attachment I ever had for the pains that life has to offer, you might expect me to become a nun without delay. But even supposing I were to commit myself and turn my back on the world, I am certain there would be moments of resolution before Amida came for me riding on his clouds. And thus I hesitate. I know the time is opportune. If I get much older my eyesight will surely weaken, I shall be unable to read the sutras, and my spirits will fail. It may seem that I am merely going through the motions of being a true believer, but I assure you that I can think of little else. But then someone with as much to atone for as myself may not qualify for salvation; there are so many things that serve to remind one of the transgressions of a former existence. Everything conspires to make me unhappy!

I want to reveal all to you, the good and the bad, worldly matters and private sorrows, things that I cannot really go on discussing in this letter. But, even though one may be thinking about and describing someone objectionable, should one really go on like this, I wonder? But you must find life irksome at times. I know I do, as you can see. Write to me with your own thoughts—no matter if you have less to say than all my useless prattle, I would love to hear from you. Mind you, if this letter ever got into the wrong hands it would be a disaster—there are ears everywhere.

[Translated by Richard Bowring]

DAUGHTER OF TAKASUE

The author of the *Sarashina Diary* was the daughter (b. 1008) of Sugawara no Takasue, a provincial governor and a direct descendant of Sugawara no Michizane, the noted literary figure and politician; she also was the niece of the author of the *Kagerō Diary*. In 1017, at the age of ten or so, the author went with her father to Kazusa Province (present-day Chiba Prefecture), where he had been appointed as governor. Then, at the age of thirteen, in 1020, she returned to the capital. The events of this journey are recorded in great detail at the beginning of the diary. In 1039, at the age of thirty-one, she went into court service as part of the entourage of Princess Yūshi, who was being raised in the Takakura Palace of her foster father, the regent Fujiwara no Yorimichi. A year later, the author's marriage to Tachibana no Toshimichi brought her back to her parents' home, but she continued to serve Yūshi intermittently,

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particularly while her husband, Toshimichi, was posted to Shimotsuke Province (present-day Tochigi Prefecture) in 1041/1042. Her marriage is only hinted at ambiguously in the diary itself, primarily with a sense of deep disappointment. It is apparent from the latter half of the diary, however, that her marriage and the subsequent birth of her son brought her both economic and spiritual security. She also continued to enjoy periodic visits to her colleagues at court, and her life provided ample opportunities for travel in the form of pilgrimages. But when her husband suddenly died in 1058, her situation took a turn for the worse, and in the latter part of the diary the author laments the loneliness of old age.

According to the postscript on the oldest extant manuscript by the noted poet Fujiwara no Teika (1162–1241), Daughter of Takasue was known to have composed four tales, of which two, *Tale of the Hamamatsu Middle Counselor* (*Hamamatsu chūnagon monogatari*) and *Awakening at Night* (*Yowa no nezame*) still exist. *Mumyō-zōshi*, an essay on monogatari written in the Kamakura period, praises these two works. Poems from the *Sarashina Diary* appear in the *Shinkokinshū* and later imperial waka anthologies, suggesting that Daughter of Takasue was discovered as a poet by Fujiwara no Teika and that later poets recognized the value of her poetry.

SARASHINA DIARY (*SARASHINA NIKKI*, CA. 1059)

The *Sarashina Diary* is known for its vivid, poetic description of the trip from Kazusa in the east to the capital, which occupies the first part of the narrative, and for its depiction of the author as a young girl absorbed in tales (monogatari). Indeed, the diary provides important evidence for the popularity of *The Tale of Genji* among readers one generation after its composition. In the *Sarashina Diary*, Daughter of Takasue reflects on more than fifty years of her life, making it, among the many kana diaries of the Heian period, the only work that covers such a long expanse, from girlhood to old age. The *Kagerō Diary* is autobiographical in character as well, but it does not deal with the author's childhood and ends when she is in middle age.

The author of the *Sarashina Diary* unified the text through the meticulous accumulation and arrangement of short passages; the extreme variety of content also sets this diary apart from others. The travel account at the beginning, which is written from the viewpoint of a thirteen-year-old girl, is unique. The latter part of the diary's narrative recounts the author's gradual disillusionment with fiction and her quest by means of pilgrimages and dream divination for both personal salvation and good fortune. A number of contrasts and oppositions emerge during the narrative, such as those between fiction and reality, Buddhism and literature, the capital and the countryside, life at court and life at home, travel and everyday life, and lightness and darkness. The *Sarashina Diary* thus does more than summarize the author's life as a progression from a misguided youthful infatuation with *The Tale of Genji* to sad disillusionment in old age; it also addresses difficult issues in a complex manner.

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A good example of this complexity is the title, which derives from a scene toward the end in which the author responds to a visit by her nephews with the following poem:

tsuki mo idede	Not even the moon
yami ni kuretaru	has come out in the dark shrouding
obasute ni	Abandoned Aunt, to which,
nani tote ko yoi	with what on your mind this night,
tazune kitsuramu	might you have come visiting?

In this poem, which expresses the loneliness of the author's life after her husband's death, readers of the time would have immediately recognized an allusion to a famous poem (found in the *Kokinshū* and *The Tales of Yamato*) that pairs Obasuteyama with Sarashina. Obasuteyama, or Mountain of Abandoned Old Woman/Aunt, which is in Sarashina Province, was associated with a legend about an ancient custom of abandoning old women on a mountain.

waga kokoro	My heart finds it
nagusame kanetsu	hard to be comforted.
Sarashina ya	Ah Sarashina!
Obasuteyama ni	On Mount Abandoned Aunt, I see
teru tsuki o mite	the bright moon shining

In the diary, the poem presents the image of a woman abandoned and lonely in old age without the light of the moon, but the allusion simultaneously calls up the bright moon shining on Obasuteyama, evoking a contrast that is repeated throughout the diary.

As a person brought up in the back of beyond, even farther than the end of the road to the East Country,[423] how uncouth I must have been, but however it was that I first came to know about them, once I knew that such things as tales existed in the world, all I could think of over and over was how much I wanted to read them. At leisure times during the day and evening, when I heard my elder sister and stepmother tell bits and pieces of this or that tale or talk about what the Shining Genji was like, my desire to read these tales for myself only increased—for how could they recite the tales to my satisfaction from memory alone? I became so impatient that I made an image of the Healing Buddha, in my own size, and performing purification rituals when no one else was around, I would secretly enter the room. Touching my forehead to the floor, I would pray with abandon, "Please grant that I should go to the capital as soon as possible where there are so many tales, and please, let me get to read all of

423. Kazusa, which occupied most of the Chiba Peninsula directly east of present-day Tokyo.

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them." Then, the year I was thirteen, it did come about that we were to go up to the capital. On the third day of the Ninth Month, we made a preliminary start by moving to a place called Imatachi, Departing Now.[424]

At sunset, a heavy unsettling fog drifted in and covered the house where I had been so used to playing for years; it was turned inside out with goods all dismantled and scattered about in preparation for our departure. Looking back, I was so sad to leave behind the Buddha standing there where I used to go when no one else was looking and touch my forehead to the floor, and without others knowing, I burst into tears.

The place to which we decamped had no protective enclosures; it was just a temporary thatched hut without even shutters and the like. Bamboo blinds and curtains had been hung. To the south, one could gaze out far in the direction of the moor. To the east and west, the sea was nearby, so fascinating. Since it was wonderfully charming, when the evening mists rose over the scene, I did not fall even into a shallow slumber, so busy was I looking now here, now there. I even found it sad that we were going to have to leave this place. On the fifteenth day of that same month, as the rain poured out of a dark sky, we crossed the border of the province and stopped at a place called Raft, and indeed the rain fell so hard it seemed as though our little hut might float away. I was so frightened I could not sleep a wink. In the midst of the moor, there was a place with a small hill on which there were only three trees standing. We stayed the day there drying out the things that had been soaked in the rain and waiting for the others in our party who had got off to a later start.

We left early on the morning of the seventeenth. Long ago, a wealthy man named Mano lived in Shimosa Province. We crossed a deep river by boat where it is said there are the remains of the house where he had tens of thousands of bolts of cloth woven and bleached. There were four large pillars standing in the river's flow that apparently were the remains of his old gate pillars. Listening to the others recite poems, I composed to myself,

kuchi mo senu	Not rotted away,
kono kawa bashira	if these pillars in the river
nokorazu wa	did not remain,
mukashi no ato o	how could we ever know
ikade shiramashi	the traces of long ago?

That night we stayed at a place called Kuroto, Black Beach. On one side, there was a wide band of hills, and where the sand stretched whitely into the

424. It was the custom in the Heian period to start journeys on astrologically auspicious days or from auspicious directions, which usually necessitated removal to a nearby temporary lodging from which the actual trip could begin. The author is playing with the place-name Imatachi, literally, "Departing Now."

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distance, groves of pine grew thickly; the moon was shining brightly; the sound of the wind was thrilling and unsettling. Moved by the scene, people composed poems:

madoromaji	I will not sleep a wink!
ko yoi narade wa	If not for this evening, then when
itsuka mimu	could I ever see this?
Kuroto no hama	Kuroto's black beach beneath
aki no yo no tsuki	the moon of an autumn night.

We left there early the next morning and stopped at a ferry landing called Matsusato on the upper reaches of a river on the border of Shimosa and Musashi called Broad River; the whole night through, our goods were ferried across by boat. My nurse, whose husband had died, was about to give birth here at this border, so we were to leave her behind and go on up to the capital. Since I loved her so much, I wanted to visit her, so my elder brother carried me on horseback to her side. It could be said that our whole party was staying in temporary huts with only curtains hung up to try to keep the wind out, but this shelter for my nurse, since she had no husband accompanying her, was so ineptly constructed and rude. It had only one layer of reed screens that had been woven together; the moonlight poured in. She was covered with a scarlet robe and was lying there in some discomfort bathed in moonlight. This seemed not right for such a person; she was so white and fair; moved by the rarity of the moment, she stroked my hair and cried. Although I found it painful to abandon her, I could not help feeling pressed to return; my regrets were hard to bear. I was so sad when I recalled her face that not even feeling anything for the beauty of the moon, I lay down in a gloomy frame of mind.

The next morning, the carts were lashed to boats and ferried across and then pulled up onto the other bank; those who had sent us off to this point all turned back. We who were going up to the capital halted until those returning were no longer in sight; those going, those staying behind, all were in tears. Even my young heart felt this very poignantly.

So now we were in Musashi Province.[425] There was nothing especially charming to be seen. There were no black beaches or white sand; it seemed very muddy, and although there was a moor on which I had heard the lavender-rooted gromwell[426] grew, there were only tall rushes and reeds growing so thickly and so high that one could not even see the tops of the bows of those mounted

425. This province covered most of the area now occupied by the city of Tokyo.

426. The gromwell (*murasaki*) is a wild perennial, whose roots yield a lavender color (*murasaki*) dye. The author refers to *Kokinshū*, no. 867: "Due to this single lavender root of the gromwell, all the wild grasses across Musashi Moor arouse a sigh as I gaze."

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on horses. Parting our way through the midst of this, we went along and came to a temple called Takeshiba. In the distance there were the remains of the foundation of a commandary called Hahasou. When I asked "What kind of place is this?" someone told this story:

"Long ago there was an estate called Takeshiba here. A man from this area was sent to be a fire keeper for the fire huts of the palace. Once when he was sweeping the imperial garden, he murmured to himself this complaint, 'Why, oh why, have I met such a cruel fate? "On the seven, on the three, saké vats of my home country, lie the straight handles of the gourd ladles. South blows the wind, they drift to the north; north blows the wind, they drift to the south; west blows the wind, they drift to the east; east blows the wind they drift to the west."[427] None of which I see, stuck here just like this.' At that moment, the emperor's daughter (a much treasured person) was standing by herself at the edge of the bamboo blinds; leaning against a pillar, she gazed out and was much moved by the serving man's solitary complaint. What kind of gourd ladles were they? How did they drift one way and another? Since she became so curious about this, she raised up the bamboo blind and summoned him, 'You over there, come here.' Full of trepidation, when he came over beside the balustrade, she ordered him, 'What you just said, repeat it one more time for me.' And so he repeated the words about the saké vats one more time. At this point, she ordered him, 'Take me there and show me these things. I have a reason for asking you.' Although he felt terribly afraid (but was this not something fated to happen?), he carried her on his back and took her down to his home country. Now, thinking that surely they would be followed, that night he set the princess down at the foot of the Seta Bridge[428] and destroyed just one section of it. Leaping back over it, he hoisted the princess on his back and seven days and seven nights later, they arrived in the province of Musashi.

"The emperor and empress were distraught when they realized the princess had disappeared. When they searched for her, someone said, 'There is a man servant, a fire keeper from the province of Musashi, he flew away with a very fragrant bundle around his neck.' When they inquired after this man servant, he was gone. Surely he must have gone back to his home province, they thought. When envoys from the court chased after him, finding the Seta Bridge broken, they could not continue. Three months later, when they arrived in Musashi and looked up this man servant, the princess summoned the imperial envoy into her presence and made the following pronouncement: 'I, for it seems

427. This appears to be a folk song from his home region. It speaks of ladles for scooping saké that are made of dried and split bottle gourds, with the narrow part of the gourd forming a straight handle. They are light and float on the surface of the vats. Their moving to and fro freely in response to the wind arouses a happy feeling.

428. The bridge across the narrow eastern neck of Lake Biwa, part of the main road to the east country.

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to have been meant to be, became very curious about this man's home, and when I said, "Take me there," he brought me here. I find it very pleasant here. If this man is punished for having committed a crime, then what about me? For me to have sought out this country must be a fate determined in a former existence. Quickly return to the court and report what has happened.' There was nothing he could say, so the envoy went back up to the capital and reported, 'It is such and so,' to the emperor. It was useless to say anything; even if this man had committed a crime, it was not as though now they could remove the princess and bring her back to the capital. So they put the Takeshiba man in charge of the province of Musashi for as long as he should live and exempted the province from public taxes and corvee duties, in effect making the princess the patron of the province. When the official proclamation came down, the man's house was renovated into a palace. Now this house where the princess lived, was turned into a temple after she passed away, and that is why it is called Takeshiba Temple. All the children born to the princess were given the surname Musashi, just like that. From that time forward, it is said that the imperial palace fires were attended by women."

There was nothing in particular to note as we passed through rushes and reeds, over moors and hills. Between the provinces of Musashi and Sagami, there is a river called Asuda (this is the river called Sumida in the *Ariwara Middle Captain Collection*,[429] where as he crossed it he composed the poem, "Come hither, I would ask you . . . "). [430] When we crossed over it by boat, we were in Sagami Province.

The mountains of a place called Nishitomi all stood in a line just like scenes that are often depicted in screen paintings. On one side was the sea, and the lay of the beach as well as the waves rolling in was terribly beautiful. At a place called the Chinese Plains, the sand was amazingly white, and it took two or three days to pass by. Someone said, "In summer, Japanese pinks bloom all over, it looks like lengths of brocade in deep and pale colors. Since it is the end of autumn, we can't see them," yet still here and there were specks of color where they bloomed charmingly. "How about that, on the Chinese Plains, Japanese pinks are blooming all around"; people found this amusing.[431]

In the Ashigara Mountains, we passed through frighteningly dark forests for four or five days. The deeper we penetrated the foothills, we could not even

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429. Reference to the personal poetry collection of Ariwara no Narihira (825–880).

430. The poem is also in *The Tales of Ise*, sec. 9, and the *Kokinshū* (no. 411). The poem's headnote records that it was written when Narihira was crossing the Sumida River and was told that the bird he saw was called the "Capital Bird." The poem reads: "Oh Capital Bird, if you bear the truth that goes with such a name, come hither, I would ask you, how fares the one I love?"

431. The play on the names containing Japanese and Chinese is amusing because the intertwining of Chinese and Japanese cultural elements was so much a part of Heian literary culture.

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see the complexion of the sky clearly, and the trees were indescribably thick; how frightening it was. On a dark night with no moon, when anyone would lose their way in the darkness, out of nowhere appeared three female entertainers. One was about fifty, one about twenty, and the other about fourteen or fifteen. In front of our lodging, they set up a large umbrella and sat down. And when the men servants brought torches so that we could see, someone said, "This is the granddaughter of the famous Kohata of the old days." The woman's hair was very long with lovely sidelocks hanging down; her skin was white and clean. "She seems hardly suited for this sort of life, why, she would not be out of place as a maid servant for the nobility," people said, much impressed. The women's voices were incomparable as they sang wonderful songs that seemed to ring clear in the sky. Everyone was very moved and had the women move closer, so excited we were. When they overheard someone say, "There couldn't be entertainers as fine as these in the West Country," they sang in a splendid way, "When you compare us to those of Naniwa. . . ."[432] Their appearance was unsullied, and when they sang, their voices were incomparable. When they rose to go back into the mountains that were so frightening, everyone regretted their going and broke into tears. Young as I was, I regretted even the fact that we would also be leaving this temporary lodging.

At first light of dawn, we crossed the Ashigara Mountains. There is no way to describe how even more frightening it was in the middle of the mountains. Why, the clouds—we tread upon them under our feet. Right in the middle of the mountains in a small space under the trees, there were just three stalks of the *aoi* plant.[433] When someone said, "Here isolated from the world, it manages to grow," people found it very poignant. The river of that mountain flows in three courses.

Finally we crossed over those mountains and stopped at a mountain border station. From here on, we were in the province of Suruga. Beside the Yokohashi border station, there was a place called Rock Basin. In the middle of an amazingly large square rock, there was an opening from which flowed water that was extremely cold and clear.

Mount Fuji is in this province. It is the mountain we could see to the west of the province I grew up in. The appearance of that mountain is like nothing else in the world. Were I to try and describe this unusual appearance—its flanks are as though painted a deep indigo blue, and since eternal snow covers its summit, it is as though someone is wearing a white short robe over an indigo

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432. The singers improvise a song about being compared with the entertainers of Naniwa, present-day Osaka, therefore the west country.

433. Stalks of the *aoi* plant are used as decorations for the Kamo Festival in Kyoto and therefore connote the splendor and liveliness of the capital at festival time. The name *aoi* is also understood as a pun for "meeting day" and evokes romantic affairs. To find three stalks of the plant in the isolated mountains strikes the party as incongruous and touching.

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gown. From the slightly flat summit of the mountain, smoke rises. At dusk, one can even see flames shooting up.

They finally arrive in the capital on the second day of the Twelfth Month and take up residence in what is now the eastern ward of the city.

It was a large wild place, not inferior in wildness to the mountains we had passed through; there were huge frightening trees like those in the deep mountains; it was a place one could scarcely believe was in the capital. We were not settled yet and extremely busy with one thing or another, but it occurred to me, "If not now, then when?" so I pestered my mother,[434] "Please find me some tales to read, please!" She sent off a letter to a relative of ours known as Lady Emon no Myōbu who served at the Third Avenue Palace.[435] She was delighted with our news and sent us some tales "that her highness has deigned to pass down to me." These were particularly splendid scrolls packed in the lid of an inkstone box. I was beside myself with joy, day or night, the first thing I applied myself to was reading these tales. I wanted to read more and more. In this city, where we were not really settled yet, where might there be a person who could seek out more tales for me?

Now, as for my stepmother, she was a person who had left court service to go down to the provinces, but things had not worked out as she wished and she seemed to feel resentment about her situation, so she went elsewhere, taking along her child of about five years and some staff.[436] She said, "There will never come a time when I will forget the kindness of your heart." Pointing to a big plum tree close to the eaves, she said, "I will come and visit when this tree blossoms again," and leaving these words behind, she went away. In my heart, I kept missing her and feeling sad, stifling my sobs, I wept, and the new year came round again.[437] "Whenever will you bloom so that she will come for a visit? I wonder if she really will." Such were my thoughts as I kept my eye on

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434. This is the first mention of the author's mother, who had not accompanied the father to the provinces but had maintained their residence in the capital. Her mother is the daughter of the much younger sister, by a different mother, of Mother of Michitsuna, the author of the *Kagerō Diary*.

435. The Third Avenue Palace was the residence of Princess Shūshi (997–1050), daughter of the late ill-fated Empress Teishi, who had been Sei Shōnagon's patron.

436. From this passage, we understand why the author's stepmother was so familiar with the tales being circulated at court. The difficult situation of the stepmother is also explained between the lines. The author's father had taken the presumably younger woman down to the provinces with him and had had a child with her, but back in the capital the stepmother must have found it difficult to live in the shadow of the first wife. At any rate, the relationship between the author and her stepmother seems to have been atypically warm. Cruel stepmothers were stock characters in Heian fiction.

437. It is the year 1021, so the author is thirteen.

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the tree and waited. Even when all the blossoms had opened, there was not a word from her. Suffering with longing, I broke off a blossoming branch and sent it to her,

tanomeshi o	Must I wait longer
nao ya matsubeki	for that which was promised, see—
shimogareshi	spring has not forgotten
ume o mo haru wa	even this plum tree
wasurezarukeri	that was withered by frost.

Since I had sent this poem, she wrote back and shared many touching thoughts,

nao tanome	Still wait, steadfast.
ume no tachi e wa	As for the plum's young branch tips,
chigiri okanu	with no pledge placed,
omoi no hoka no	I hear someone quite
hito mo tounari	unexpected will ask after you.[438]

That spring, when the world was in an uproar because of an epidemic, the nurse whom I had seen so poignantly in the moonlight at Matsusato Crossing died on the first day of the Third Month. I grieved for her helplessly; I even lost all interest in reading tales. All day long, I spent crying and when I glanced out, the evening sun was shining brilliantly on the cherry blossoms as they all fluttered down in confusion,

chiru hana mo	Scattering blossoms,
mata komu haru wa	when spring comes round again,
mimu ya semu	I may see them, but,
yagate wakareshi	oh, how I long for this one
hito zo kanashiki	from whom I am parted forever.

There was more news. The daughter of the major counselor[439] had died. Since I heard about how her husband, his lordship the middle captain,[440] grieved for her just at the same time as my own bereavement, I was deeply

438. This poem alludes to a poem by Taira no Kanemori, *Shūishū*, no. 15: "The young branch tips of the plum tree in my garden must have come out in bloom; unexpectedly you seem to have deigned to visit." The stepmother may be referring to the author's birth mother or perhaps a future lover.

439. Fujiwara no Yukinari (972–1027), a famous calligrapher.

440. Yukinari's daughter had been married at the age of twelve to the youngest son of Fujiwara no Michinaga, Fujiwara no Nagaie. He was seventeen at the time of their marriage. She died only three years later, at the age of fifteen.

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saddened by the news. When we had come back to the capital, someone had given me some calligraphy in this young lady's own hand, saying, "Take this as a model for your own practice." She had written poems like "As night deepens, if I could not stay awake . . . "[441] and

Toribeyama	If the smoke rises from
tani ni keburi no	the valley of Toribeyama,
moe tataba	I would have you
hakanaku mieshi	realize that it is me
ware to shiranamu.	who looked so fragile in life.[442]

Seeing this written in such a charming and skillful way, my tears flowed all the more.

My mother worried about the depression I had sunk into and thought to brighten my spirits by finding some more tales for me to read, and indeed as a matter of course, this did lighten my spirits. After I had read the part of *The Tale of Genji* about the lavender affinity,[443] I wanted even more to see what would happen next, but there was no one I could approach to obtain the rest of the tale, and everyone else in our household was as yet so new to the capital, they were unable to find it for me. Feeling so terribly impatient and eager to read more, I prayed in my heart, "Please grant that I may get to read *The Tale of Genji* from the first chapter the whole way through." Even when I went along with my parents into religious retreat at Uzumasa,[444] this was the only object of my prayers, and when we left the temple, I thought for certain I would get to see this tale, but it did not appear and I regretted this sorely. Then my parents had me go and meet an aunt who had come up from the countryside. "My, what a beautiful girl you have grown into," she said among other things and seemed to take a great liking to me. When I was about to return home, she said, "What shall I give you for a present? Certainly it should not be anything practical. I would like to give you something you really want." Then I received

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441. Mibu no Tadami, *Shūishū*, no. 104: "As night deepens, if I could not stay awake, the cuckoo's voice would be something I would only hear about from others."

442. Anonymous, *Shūishū*, no. 1324. Toribeyama is a place for cremation. The poem seems to foretell her own death.

443. Genji's mother was the Kiritsubo (Paulownia Court) consort. The paulownia tree has lavender flowers. Genji's stepmother, with whom he had a secret affair, was called the Fujitsubo (Wisteria Court) consort. The wisteria is also a lavender-color flower. Genji falls in love with young Murasaki because of her resemblance to Fujistubo. The *murasaki* (gromwell) has roots that yield a lavender dye. The connection among these three characters is called the lavender affinity. The author is likely referring to the "Lavender" (Wakamurasaki) chapter of *The Tale of Genji*.

444. Uzumasa is in the western part of the city. The temple there is Kōryūji.

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the fifty-odd chapters of *The Tale of Genji* in a large box,[445] as well as the tales *Ariwara Middle Captain*,[446] *Tōgimi*, *Serikawa*, *Shirara*, *Asōzu*,[447] and others in a bag; carrying them home, the joy I felt was incredible.

With my heart pounding with excitement, I was able to read *The Tale of Genji* (this tale that had confused me and made me so impatient when I had read only a piece of it) right from chapter one. I did not have anything to do with the rest of the household; I just lay down inside my curtains, and the feeling I had as I unrolled scroll after scroll[448] was such that I would not have cared even if I had had a chance to become empress. I read all day long and as long as I could stay awake at night with the lamp pulled close to me. I found it quite amazing that passages I knew by heart would come floating unbidden into my head (since I did nothing but read, I suppose it was only natural). Then in a dream, I saw a pure-looking monk wearing a surplice of yellow cloth who said to me, "Quickly, memorize the fifth chapter of the Lotus Sutra." But I told no one, nor did I feel particularly inclined to memorize the Lotus Sutra. I was just infatuated with tales. I was rather ugly in those days, you know, but I was sure that when I grew up I would be extremely beautiful and my hair, too, would be splendidly long; I would just be like the Shining Genji's Yūgao or the Uji Captain's Ukifune—now it seems to me that my thoughts were frightfully frivolous.

Around the first of the Fifth Month, gazing at the scattered and ever so white petals of the nearby orange blossom tree, I composed this:

toki narazu	Gazing at this,
furu yuki ka to zo	I might think that snow had fallen
nagamemashi	out of season,
hanatachibana no	if it were not for the fragrance
kaorazariseba	of this orange blossom tree.

Since our place was as thick with trees as the dark woods on the flanks of the Ashigara Mountains, the crimson leaves of the Tenth Month were even more beautiful than those of the hills on all sides. When they were just like lengths of brocade spread over the forest, some visitors came who said, "There was a place on the way here that was simply beautiful with crimson leaves!" On the spot, it came to me,

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445. The comment is critical evidence that the full length of *The Tale of Genji* at this time was "fifty-odd" chapters. Textual scholars of *Genji* wish that the author had been more specific about the number.

446. *The Tales of Ise*.

447. None of these other tales survives.

448. It is known that women would often read tales aloud to one another, but this comment is evidence that they also read silently by themselves.

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izuko nimo	It is not likely
otaraji mono o	inferior to anywhere else
waga yado no	this lodging of ours,
yo o aki hatsuru	yet you only speak of autumn scenery
keshiki bakari wa	that wearies us of the world.[449]

I thought about tales all day long, and even at night as long as I could stay awake, this was all I had on my mind. Then, I had a dream in which a person said, "For the sake of Her Highness of the First Rank,[450] I constructed a small stream in the Hexagonal Hall." [451] When I asked, "Why is this so?" the response was, "Worship Amaterasu, Great Heaven Shining God."[452] Such was my dream, but I did not tell anyone and let it go without a thought; what a hopeless case I was.

Every spring I would gaze at the garden of Her Highness of the First Rank next door thinking "Ah they are about to bloom" and eagerly await them; "Ah, they have scattered," and regret their passing. It was as though those blossoms were in my own yard in the spring. Toward the end of the Third Month, to avoid the taboo of the earth god, we went to stay at someone else's house where the cherry trees were in full bloom, so lovely, not a one scattering even this late in the spring. Upon returning, the next day, I sent this to them,

akazarishi	Not sated at all
yado no sakura o	with the cherry blossoms of your house,
haru kurete	spring drew to a close,
chirigata ni shimo	you must have seen them
hitome mishi kana	as they began to fall.

Always at about the time the cherry blossoms fell, since that was the season when my nurse had died, I could not help feeling sad; moreover, looking at the calligraphy of the major counselor's daughter who had died around the same time would also make me sad. Then, in the Fifth Month as night fell, when I

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449. This poem involves puns on *yo wo aki* (weary of the world) and *aki hatsuru* (autumn ending). She playfully uses the Buddhist terminology "that wearies us of the world" to gently chide their guests for failing to praise their autumn scenery.

450. Princess Teishi (1013–1094), a granddaughter of Michinaga and not to be confused with the late Empress Teishi mentioned earlier.

451. Hexagonal Hall refers to the Chōhōji, a temple in central Kyoto that houses one of the "Seven Kannon of the Capital."

452. The tutelary god of the imperial family. The author's perception of the identity of Amaterasu seems to have been quite vague. It is not at all certain that she conceived of this being as a "goddess." The mention of Amaterasu in connection with a temple dedicated to Kannon may indicate the widespread belief at the time that Amaterasu was an avatar of Kannon.

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was still up reading tales, I heard the soft mew of a cat coming from where I knew not. I was startled to see an incredibly charming cat. When I was looking around to see where the cat had come from, my elder sister said, "Hush, don't let anyone know. It is such a lovely cat, let's keep it for ourselves," and so we did. The cat got very used to us and would lie down right beside us. Since we wondered if someone might come looking for it, we hid it from others and did not let it go at all to the servant quarters. It stayed right with us all the time, and if something unclean was put before it to eat, it would turn its head away and refuse to eat it.

It stuck to the two of us; we were so happy and enchanted with it, but just around then, my sister fell ill. Since the house was in an uproar, I shut up the cat in the north wing[453] and did not summon it to our side, whereupon it raised a fuss, meowing noisily. Of course, this was understandable. Then my sister woke up from a painful slumber and said, "Where is the cat? Please bring it here." "Why?" I asked and she said, "In my dream, the cat came to my side and said, 'I am the daughter of the major counselor who has been reborn like this. Because of some small bond of fate from a former existence, I have somehow come to be loved by you two sisters. Just for a while, I could be with you here, but now you have shut me away with the servants, how awful it is!' and the appearance of the cat crying was just like a wellborn beautiful woman. I woke up with a start and hearing the cat meowing, I was smitten with pity." I was very moved by her story and brought the cat out of the north wing, treating it very kindly after that. When I was all by myself, the cat would come to me and I would stroke it saying, "So you are the beloved young daughter of the major counselor. How I would like to let him know." When I spoke like this, the cat would stare into my eyes mewing softly. There was no doubt about it, even from one glance one could tell this was not an ordinary cat. The way its face looked when it seemed to listen and understand was so touching.

I heard about someone who owned a copy of "The Song of Everlasting Sorrow"[454] that had been adapted into the form of a tale.[455] Although I was so curious to see it, the person was not someone I could approach directly. Seeking out a suitable intermediary, I sent over this poem on the seventh day of the Seventh Month,[456]

chirikemu	Curious this day
mukashi no kyō no	upon which long ago they

453. That is, the servant quarters.

454. Famous poem by the Tang poet Bo Juyi about the ill-fated love between Emperor Xuanzong and his concubine Yang Guifei.

455. Presumably, this is a vernacular Japanese translation of the poem with illustrations.

456. Tanabata, the festival of the stars when the Weaver Maid and Herdsman stars (Altair and Vega) are allowed to meet by crossing the bridge provided by the wings of magpies.

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yukashisa ni	must have pledged their troth;
ama no kawa nami	like the waves rising on the
idetsuru kana	River of Heaven, this is sent out.

The reply,

tachi izuru	This is sent out to
ama no kawabe no	the one so curious
yukashisa ni	by Heaven's River;
tsune wa yuyushiki	one forgets this is a story
koto mo wasurenu	that was unhappy in the end.

On the night of the thirteenth of that same month, the moon shone brightly, lighting up every corner of the house. When everyone was asleep, my elder sister and I went out onto the veranda, and my sister stared intently at the sky, "How would you feel if I were to simply fly away and disappear right now?" Seeing the uncomfortable and fearful look on my face, she changed the subject and laughed merrily. Just then, at the house next door, a carriage for which the way had been cleared stopped, and someone called out, "Reed leaf, sweet reed leaf," but there was no answer. Tired of calling out, whoever it was played charmingly on a flute and moved on. I said,

fue no ne no	Since the voice
tada akikaze to	of the flute sounded just like
kikoyuru ni	the autumn wind,
nado ogi no ha no	why then did the reed leaf
soyo to kotaenu	not rustle in response?

With an air of "Well done," my sister responded,

ogi no ha no	That he did not keep
kotauru made mo	playing until the reed leaf responded,
fuki yorade	but passed by just
tada ni suginuru	like that, the voice of that flute,
fue no ne zo uki	it is really depressing.

In this way, right until dawn, we contemplated the brightness of the moon, and when dawn finally broke, we both went to bed.

That next year,[457] in the Fourth Month in the middle of the night, there was a fire and the cat on which we had lavished such care, thinking it to be the

457. The year is 1023.

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reincarnation of the major counselor's daughter, was burned to death. When I recalled how the cat would come when we called "Young Miss of the Major Counselor," looking as if it understood what we were saying (even father said, "This is truly marvelous; I should tell the major counselor about it"), I felt terribly bereft and thought what a shame it was to have lost her.

Since the spacious grounds of our house were like the scenery in the deep mountains, I had got used to seeing the flowers and crimson leaves of the passing seasons, which were as splendid as those of the mountains, on all sides. Now we had moved to an incomparably cramped place with hardly a garden at all and no trees; how depressing I found it. When the white and red plums of the house in front of this place were blooming in gay profusion, even when I was bathed in the fragrance brought by the wind, how much I missed the old home I was used to and yearned for it.

nioi kuru	Redolent with scent,
tonari no kaze o	the wind from the neighbor's yard
mi ni shimete	soaks into me,
arishi nokiba no	oh, how I yearn for the plum tree
ume zo koishiki	of the eaves I once knew well.

On the first day of the Fifth Month of that year,[458] my elder sister died in childbirth. Ever since I was a child, even the news that someone I did not really know had died would plunge me into deep sorrow; I grieved now with a sorrow that beggared all description. Mother and the others observed the wake with the departed one, so I took her young children, the keepsakes she had left behind, and put one on my left side and one on my right side. Through the cracks in the rough boards of the roof, the moonlight leaked in and shone on the face of one of the little ones. Finding this inauspicious, I covered his face with a sleeve and pulled the other one closer; how terrible were my thoughts!

An interval of about two years passes.

In this way, life went on and my mind was constantly occupied with nothing in particular. When on the rare occasion I went on a pilgrimage, even then I could not concentrate my prayers on becoming somebody in the world (nowadays people read sutras and devote themselves to religious practice even from the age of seventeen or eighteen, but I just could not put my mind to that sort of thing).[459] Somehow my thoughts were captivated by this scene—I would be a noble and elegant woman, beautiful in appearance and manner, whom some

458. The year is 1024, when the author is about seventeen years old.

459. The remark about "nowadays" indicates the retrospective nature of this entry.

เนื้อหาคุ้มครองลิขสิทธิ์

hero in a tale, someone like the Shining Genji, would hide away in the mountains like the Lady Ukifune and would visit, even if it were only once a year.[460] There I would gaze out at the blossoms, the crimson leaves, the moon, the snow; sunk in a melancholy languor, I would wait to read his occasional letters, which would of course be splendid—this was all I dreamed about, and I even felt this was the future I wanted for myself.

Then my father's life came to a turning point.[461] He had somehow hoped to see me settled in even a distinguished position, but time had just passed by without his intentions taking any direction, and now, finally, he was to take up a post far away in the distant East Country. "For years now, I have been expecting to receive a posting in the nearby provinces, and then with a mind free of worry, the first thing I could attend to would be taking care of you in fine style. I could take you with me on tours of duty, show you the seaside and mountain scenery, and, as a matter of course, see you settled into a higher social position than mine, in which all your needs would be met. This is what I wanted, but since it is our fate, both yours and mine, not to be blessed with good fortune, after all this waiting and hoping, now I am to take up a post far away. In your youth, even when I took you with me down to the East Country, I felt a little bad about it. I thought, 'What would happen if I have to abandon her to wander lost in this wild province? If it were just me alone facing the dangers of this alien country, I would be calm, but dragging her and the household with me, I cannot even say what I want to say, nor do what I want to do. How painful this is,' and my heart was torn to pieces with worry. Now this time, how much more am I concerned. I cannot take you off to the provinces as an adult when I cannot be certain about my own life (even though left behind in the capital, it is to be expected you will be living in reduced circumstances). Still that is preferable to imagining you adrift, wandering around as a country rustic in the East Country; that would be too terrible. Yet even in the capital, there is no relative or close friend on whom I can rely to take you in. Nonetheless, since I am not in a position to refuse this posting I have just barely been given, all I can do is leave you behind in the capital and resign myself to a long separation. Yet it is not as though even in the capital, I can leave you maintained in the style I should."[462] I felt so sad listening to my father lament like this day and night, I even lost my feeling for the blossoms and crimson leaves. Although I bemoaned this situation terribly, what could I do about it?

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460. Her imagined scene combines two characters in *The Tale of Genji* who are unconnected in the tale itself. Genji is the hero of the first forty-one chapters of the work; Ukifune makes her first physical appearance in chapter 49. It is Kaoru who hides Ukifune at Uji.

461. The year is 1032, when the author is twenty-five years old. Her father is sixty years old and has been expecting to get a provincial governorship in one of the provinces close to the capital, but instead he is appointed to Hitachi, the province next to his former post in Kazusa.

462. The father's rambling, repetitious speech shows the anxiousness of his mind.

เนื้อหาคุ้มครองลิขสิทธิ์

Father went down to his province on the thirteenth day of the Seventh Month. For five days before his departure, he had been unable to bear seeing me and so had not come into my room. On the day he was to leave, everyone was busy with the departure; how much worse I felt at the very moment when he raised the bamboo blind of my room and looked at me with tears pouring down his face. He left just like that. My eyes were blind with tears, and I had just lain down in my room when the household servants who were to remain behind had come back from seeing him off and delivered this letter written on folded note paper:

omou koto	If I were in a
kokoro ni kanau	position that fulfilled the
mi nariseba	wishes of my heart,
aki no wakare o	then would I savor deeply
fukaku shiramashi	the feeling of this autumn parting.[463]

This was all he had written, yet I could hardly read it through. Even at ordinary times, I can only think up verses with "broken backs,"[464] but somehow I felt I must say something, so in that state of mind I wrote almost unconsciously,

kakete koso	Never at all
omowazari shika	did I ever think that
kono yo nite	in this world,
shibashi mo kimi ni	even for a little while,
wakarubeshi to wa	I would be parted from you.

Now more than ever, no visitors came. I gazed constantly into space feeling lonely and bereft, imagining day and night how far he might have gone. Since I knew the path he was taking, as the distance grew between us, there was no limit to my yearning, loving thoughts. From dawn until dusk, I would spend my days staring at the rim of the mountains to the east. . . .

In this way as I drifted along in life, I wondered why I had not gone on pilgrimages. Of course, my mother was very old-fashioned. "A trip to Hatsuse Temple? How frightening the thought! What would I do if you were abducted on the slopes of the Nara hills? Ishiyama Temple? It would be terrifying to cross the Barrier Mountain. As for Kurama, the thought of taking you to that mountain is also frightening. Anyway, until your father gets back, it is out of the

463. Parting in autumn, although sad, is celebrated in poetry. If her father had received the post he hoped for, he would have been able to appreciate the poetic feelings of parting in autumn. In his current situation, there is no such pleasure.

464. A fault in poetry composition in which the third line (thought of as the backbone of a poem) does not connect well with the fourth line.

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question." She seemed to think me troublesome as though I were some kind of outcast. Finally, she took me on a retreat to Kiyomizu Temple. But that time, too, as was my habit, I simply could not concentrate on my prayers. It was around the time of the equinox rites, and the temple was terribly noisy to the point of being frightening. When I finally fell into a fretful slumber, I dreamed that a monk, apparently a kind of steward, dressed in a blue woven robe and wearing a brocade headpiece and brocade shoes, came up to the railing where my curtain was and said in a chiding way, "Unaware of the sad future awaiting you, you just waste your time on idle concerns." Then he made as though to enter my curtains. Even having seen such a dream and having woke up with a start, I did not tell people, "I have seen such and so," and not even taking it particularly to heart, I went back home.

Then mother had a mirror cast one foot in circumference, and saying that it would be in place of taking me on a pilgrimage, she sent a monk on a pilgrimage to Hatsuse. She apparently told him, "Go perform devotions for three days. Please divine what future is in store for my daughter by having a dream." For that same period of time, she also had me maintain a regime of abstinence.

This monk returned and gave the following report: "Were I to come back without having at least seen one dream, it would be so disappointing, and what would I have to say for myself, so I made obeisances fervently and when I fell asleep, I saw a wonderfully noble and lovely looking woman emerge from behind curtains of state garbed in lustrous robes; she carried the offering mirror in her hand. 'Was there a letter of vows with this?' she asked. I respectfully replied, 'There was not. This mirror by itself is the offering.' 'How strange,' she said. 'This should be accompanied by a letter of vows.' Then she said, 'Look at what is reflected here in this mirror. When you look, it will be deeply sad!' and she wept and sobbed softly. When I looked in the mirror, there was the reflection of someone collapsed on the floor crying and lamenting. 'When you look at this reflection, it is very sad, is it not? Now, look at this,' and she showed me the reflection on the other side of the mirror.[465] Amid beautiful bamboo blinds and other hangings, various robes poured out from under curtains of state; plum and cherry blossoms were in bloom and from the tips of tree branches, warblers were singing. 'Looking at this makes one very happy, does it not?' she said. That is what I saw in the dream." Such was his report, but I did not really pay attention to what had been seen.

Even though I was of such a frivolous turn of mind, there was someone who was always telling me, "Pray to the Holy Deity Amaterasu." I had no idea of where Amaterasu might be or even whether this friend was speaking of a god

465. A mirror would normally have only one polished side. This is a dream, however, so considerations of realism are not at issue.

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or a Buddha.[466] Even so, gradually I began to be interested and asked about it. I was told, "It is a god; this god dwells in Ise. In the province of Kii, the one they call the 'Creator of Ki' is also the same holy god.[467] Moreover, it is also this god who is the guardian deity in the Sacred Mirror Room in the palace."[468] As far as going to the province of Ise to worship, that did not seem to be anything I could consider, and as for the Sacred Mirror Room of the palace, how could I go and worship there? Since it seemed that all there was to do was to pray to the light of the sky, I felt rather in the air.

Four years pass.

My father, who had been down in the East Country, finally came back up to the capital,[469] and since he settled down in a residence in the Western Hills, we all went to see him there. Wonderfully happy, on a bright moonlit night, we spent the whole night telling one another stories. I composed,

kakaru yo mo	That there could be
arikeru mono o	a night like this in a world like this,
kagiri tote	beyond the limit of joy—
kimi ni wakareshi	that autumn of parting from you,
aki wa ikani zo	it passed the limit too.

Father broke into tears and composed in return,

omou koto	Things not going
kanawazu nazo to	the way I had wished,
ito hikoshi	why live on? I thought;
inochi no hodo mo	now, to have lived as long as this
ima zo ureshiki	what happiness it is!

Ah this, compared with the sadness I felt when he came to tell me of his imminent departure, this joy of having him return safely after the long wait could not be exceeded by anything. Yet when father kept saying, "From what I have seen of people even in superior positions, when an old man whose abilities have declined mixes in society, he is regarded as foolish. So, as for myself, I

466. Amaterasu, literally "Illuminating Heaven," is the Sun Goddess, titular deity of the imperial family. The author claims ignorance of whether Amaterasu is a god or Buddha. Certainly, she appears to have no consciousness of this deity as being gendered female.

467. This remark actually betrays a confusion between a pre-Nara-period official title, Creator of Ki, and the worship of the Sun Goddess in the province of Ki.

468. This information is correct.

469. Takasue returned to the capital in 1036 at the age of sixty-four. The author is twenty-nine.

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have decided to close my gate and retreat from the world like this." The way he seemed to have given up all interest in the world made me quite unbearably forlorn. . . .[470]

In the Tenth Month, we moved into the capital. Mother became a nun; although she stayed in the same house with us, she lived apart in her own quarters. As for father, he just wanted to have me assume the position of mistress of the household, but when I saw that this would mean I would be hidden away and never mix with the world, I felt bereft of support. Around this time, a suggestion came from someone with whom we had a connection and who knew about me that I might serve at court,[471] "Surely it would be better than having her mope around the house with nothing to do." My old-fashioned parents found the idea of my becoming a serving woman most distasteful and so I stayed at home. However, several people said, "Nowadays, almost every young woman goes into service like that, and there have been cases of women who have done very well for themselves indeed. Why don't you give it a try?" So grudgingly father became willing to send me to court.

On the first occasion, I went into service for just one night.[472] I wore a not so deeply dyed ensemble of only eight layers with a jacket of lustrous silk. For me, who had only concentrated my mind on tales and aside from this had known nothing of the world and who, just living under the protection of my old-fashioned parents, had only visited with relatives and who was used only to gazing at the moon and the blossoms—as for my feelings at this moment of stepping out into court service—I could hardly believe it was me or that this was reality. In this state of mind, I returned home at dawn.

When I was a housebound woman, I used to occasionally feel that rather than being stuck forever at home, to go to serve at court would give me the opportunity to see interesting things and might even brighten my outlook, but now I felt uncertain. It seemed to me that indeed there would be things about this new life that might cause me sorrow. Nonetheless, what could I do about it?

In the Twelfth Month, I went again to serve. I was given my own sleeping quarters, and this time I performed duties during the day. Sometimes I would

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470. This seems to be a veiled reference to her own situation. Her father's leaving the world of political activity means that he will not be able to do anything positive about her prospects in the world, whether it be marriage or a career at court.

471. To serve at court means to take a position as lady-in-waiting in the entourages of any of the members of the imperial family.

472. She becomes a lady-in-waiting to Princess Yūshi (1038–1105), who is a child younger than two years old at the time. Princess Yūshi was the daughter of the reigning emperor GoSuzaku and the late Princess Genshi. Genshi was adopted by Fujiwara no Yorimichi after her mother, Empress Teishi, died. Thus Princess Yūshi was being raised in the Takakura Palace of her adoptive grandfather Yorimichi, who was the regent at the time. Service in that household had the potential of putting the author in touch with members of the inner circle of Heian aristocracy. It appears that she starts as a part-time lady-in-waiting for a trial period.

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go up to my mistress's chambers and serve on night duty for a few nights. Having to lie down among strangers, I was unable to sleep a wink. I felt so embarrassed and on my guard not to make mistakes that I could not help weeping in secret from the strain. At the first light of dawn while it was still quite dark, I would go back to my own sleeping quarters and spend the whole day distractedly yearning for my family, thinking about my father who, now aged and in decline, depended especially on me. In fact we depended on each other. Then, there were my orphaned nephews and niece[473] who had been with me since they were born and slept on my left and right side at night and got up with me in the morning; how poignantly I now recalled them. So I would end up spending my time lost in homesick reverie. My ears would prick up and sense that someone was peeking in at me; how terribly uneasy I was.

After a period of ten days of service, when I returned home, I found my father and mother waiting for me having kindled a fire in the brazier. At the moment of seeing me get down from the carriage, they broke into tears and said, "While you were here, we would see people from time to time, but since you have gone into service, days go by without the sound of human voices and we hardly see anyone; how forlorn and lonely we have been. If this goes on, what is going to become of us?"

Seeing them made me feel so sad. The next morning, they exclaimed, "Since you are home today, the family members and visitors are many; the house feels really lively." Face to face with them, I was moved; some indefinable joy brought me to the verge of tears.

Even for religious adepts, it is very difficult to learn about former lives through dreams, but somehow I felt that going on like this with no sense of direction was not very satisfying, so I had someone try to divine my former life in a dream. I was at the main hall of Kiyomizu Temple. A monk who was a kind of steward came out and reported, "You were actually once a monk in this very temple. As a monk artisan, you accumulated merit by making many Buddha statues. And so you were born into this life well above that lowly station. You built the thirty-foot Buddha[474] who resides in the east section of this hall. As a matter of fact, you died while you were applying the gold foil to this image." "My goodness! This means, does it, that I applied the gold foil to that Buddha over there?" "Since you died while you were doing it, it was a different person who applied the gold foil, and a different person who performed the offering ceremony when it was done." Having received the report of such a dream, afterward, had I made fervent pilgrimages to Kiyomizu Temple, on the strength

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473. The children of her elder sister. It now has been fifteen years since her sister died.

474. The measurement mentioned is *ichijōrokushaku*, which is approximately thirty feet. From the size and description of its placement, the monk is likely referring to the central image of the Amida Buddha in the Kiyomizu Main Hall.

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of having worshiped the Buddha at that main hall in a former life, I would, as a matter of course, have done something good for my salvation. But there is really nothing I can say for myself; this affair ended with my being no more assiduous about making pilgrimages than before.

On the twenty-fifth of the Twelfth Month,[475] I was invited to attend the rite of Calling the Buddha's Names[476] at the princess's palace. I went expecting to stay only that night. There were as many as forty attendants all in layers of white robes with jackets of lustrous silk. I hid myself behind the lady who was my guide at court and, after barely showing myself, returned home at dawn. Snow had begun to flutter down; in the amazingly severe freezing chill of the dawn light, the moon faintly reflected in my lustrous sleeves truly recalled the "face damp with tears" of long ago.[477] On the road back, I composed,

toshi wa kure	The year is ending,
yo wa akegata no	the night begins to dawn,
tsuki kage no	both ephemeral
sode ni utsureru	as the rays of the moon
hodo zo hakanaki	reflected on these sleeves of mine.

Well, even if my debut had been like this, somehow I began to accustom myself to service at court. Although I was somewhat distracted by other things, it was not to the extent that people regarded me as eccentric, and as a matter of course, it seemed as though I had come to be regarded and treated as one of the company, but my parents did not understand, and before long, they ended up shutting me away at home.[478] Even so, it was not as though my way of life became suddenly bright and lively. Rather, although I was used to feeling very much at odds with life, now the situation I found myself in was utterly contrary to all my hopes.

ikuchi tabi	How many thousand times
mizu no ta zeri o	have I plucked the field parsley
tsumi shika wa	from the water thus,

475. An intercalary Twelfth Month of 1039.

476. The "Calling the Buddha's Names" was an annual event at the imperial palace that involved reciting the names of all three thousand buddhas in order to expiate the sins of the past year. After the event at the imperial palace, the same event was repeated in the home palaces of the imperial consorts. The ceremony that the author attends is presumably at the Takakura Palace.

477. An allusion to *Kokinshū*, no. 756: "Joining me in feeling at a time when I brood on things, the moon dwelling in these sleeves of mine also has a face damp with tears."

478. This is a veiled reference to her marriage to Tachibana no Toshimichi (1002–1058). From her following comments, it does not appear that it was a match to her taste at first.

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omoishi koto no without a dew drop falling
tsuyu mo kanawanu in the direction of my hopes.[479]

With just this solitary complaint, I let matters go.

Meanwhile, I became distracted by this and that and completely forgot even about the world of the tales. I actually ended up feeling quite down to earth. Over the years and months, as I lay down and got up in meaningless activity, why had I not devoted myself to religious practices or pilgrimages? Ah, but, the things I had hoped for, the things I had wished for, could they ever really happen in this world? After all, was a man like the Shining Genji ever likely to exist in this world? No, this is a world in which being hidden away at Uji by Captain Kaoru could never happen.[480] Oh, how crazy I was and how foolish I came to feel. Such were the thoughts that sunk in, and had I then carried on with my feet on the ground, maybe things would have been all right, but it did not end up that way.

Some friends had informed the place at which I had first gone into court service that it did not appear staying cooped up at home like this was really my true wish, so there were endless requests for my attendance, and among them came a particular one, "Send the young lady to court,"[481] an order that could not be ignored, so I found myself drawn back into occasional service in the course of presenting my niece to court. However, it was not as though I could in the least entertain the vain and immodest hopes such as I had in the days gone by; after all, I was just being drawn along by my niece. On the occasions when I went to serve, the situation was like this. The women really familiar with court service are in a class by themselves and greet any occurrence with a knowing face, but as for me, although I could not be regarded as a novice, neither could I be treated as an old hand, so I was kept at a distance like an occasional guest. Although I was in this uncertain position, since I was not one who had to rely solely on that kind of work, I was not particularly envious of those who were so much better at it than me. In fact, I felt rather at ease, going to court just on suitable occasions, chatting with those women who happened to have time on their hands. On celebratory occasions, and interesting, pleasant occasions too, in my present situation I was able to mix with society in this way. Of course, since I had to maintain a reserve and take care not to push myself forward too much, I was privy only to the general goings-on at court. As I passed my time thus, there came a time when I accompanied the princess to the

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479. "Plucking field parsley" was a proverbial expression for putting all one's heart into a project and having it come to nothing.

480. A reference to her youthful dream to be kept in a rural setting by someone as handsome as Genji.

481. A request to present the author's niece.

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imperial palace.[482] One dawn when the moon was so bright, I thought to myself, "The god Amaterasu to whom I have been praying actually resides right here in the palace mirror room; I would actually like to take this occasion to worship here." So in the brightness of the moonlight of the Fourth Month, ever so secretly, I went to pay my respects with the guidance of an acquaintance, Lady Myōbu, who served as mistress of the inner chambers. In the very faint light of the lamp stand, she looked amazingly ancient and partook of a divine quality; as she sat there speaking of fine things as one might expect, she seemed scarcely like a human being, one might even think she was the god manifesting itself.

The author recounts more service at the imperial palace, including a romantic conversation and correspondence with a courtier that fulfilled her fiction-inspired expectations. The diary resumes after a gap of two or three years.

Now I had come to a sharp awareness of regretting only the absurd fancies of long ago, and I also could not help recalling with vexation how I had ended up not going along on my parents' pilgrimages and such. And now, too, I was wealthy and full of energy, able to raise my "little sprout"[483] with the plentiful care I wanted. My situation in the world exceeded that of the "Great Treasure House" mountain, and so it spurred my concern and desires for the world to come. Just past the twentieth of the Eleventh Month,[484] I went on a pilgrimage to Ishiyama Temple.

Snow was falling; the scenery along the way was beautiful. When I saw the Osaka Border Barrier, I suddenly recalled that the time we crossed this border long ago[485] it also was winter and, at that time too, how wildly the wind blew.

Ōsaka no	The voice of the
seki no seki kaze	border wind blowing now
fuku koe wa	through the barrier,
mukashi kikishi ni	from the one I heard long ago
kawarazarikeri	is no different at all.

482. An occurrence in 1042.

483. A reference to a son she had with Toshimichi. Later in the diary, she mentions children in the plural, and it is known that she had another son and one daughter with Toshimichi, but the diary gives no precise information about the births. From other sources, it is also known that Toshimichi was governor of Shimotsuke Province starting in 1041 and would have returned to the capital around the time of this entry.

484. The year is 1045, when the author is thirty-eight years old.

485. The Osaka Barrier is in the mountains between the capital and Lake Biwa. The author passed the barrier when she was thirteen years old on her way to the capital from the east.

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When I saw how splendid the Barrier Temple had been built up, I recalled how, that time before, one could only see the roughly hewn face of the Buddha. How touching it was to realize how many months and years had passed.

The area around the beach of Uchiide and so forth looked no different than before. We arrived at the goal of our pilgrimage just as it was getting dark. Getting down at the purification pavilion, we went up to the Sacred Hall. No one spoke. I found the sound of the mountain wind to be frightening. I dozed off while I was praying, and in a dream a person told me, "Some musk deer incense has been bestowed upon us by the Central Hall. Quickly announce this over there." I woke up with a start and when I realized that it had been a dream, I felt it must be auspicious, so I spent the whole night in religious devotions.

The next day, too, snow fell heavily. Speaking with the friend I had got to know at court and who had accompanied me on the pilgrimage, I tried to soothe the feelings of uneasiness. We were in retreat for three days and then went back.

That following year, there was a great buzz about the procession for the Great Purification preceding the Great Festival of Thanksgiving that was to be held on the twenty-fifth day of the Tenth Month.[486] I had started fasting in preparation for a pilgrimage to Hatsuse Temple, and because I was to leave the capital on that very day, people whom one might expect to take an interest in my affairs said things like, "This is something one only gets to see once in a reign, even people from the countryside and all over the place are coming in to see it. After all, there are so many days in a month. For you to go off and desert the capital on that very day, why, it's crazy; it will certainly be a tale people will pass around." Although my brother fumed about it, the father of my children said, "No matter what, do what you think best."[487] I was quite moved by his willingness to send me off in accordance with what I had said. It seems that those who were to accompany me wanted very much to view the procession. Although it was sad for them, I thought to myself, "After all, what does sightseeing amount to? The zeal to want to make a pilgrimage on this kind of occasion will surely be recognized as such. I shall certainly see a sacred sign from the Buddha." I strengthened my will and left at first light of that day. Just as we were passing along the grand avenue of Nijō (I had had my attendants

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486. The Great Festival of Thanksgiving is the grander version of the annual Festival of First Fruits. The Great Festival was held on years when a new emperor was officially enthroned. Emperor GoReizei (1025–1068) had assumed the throne the previous year. It was the custom to hold the official enthronement rites the year after the succession. The Great Purification preceding the festival had the new emperor perform a ritual ablution on the banks of the Kamo River. The pomp and pageantry made it a popular event for sightseeing.

487. This is the first direct mention of the author's husband in the diary, and it casts a surprisingly positive light on their relationship given her initially negative reaction to the marriage.

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wear pilgrim's white garments and those in front carry holy lanterns), there were a lot of people going to and fro, some on horseback, some in ox carriages, some on foot, on their way to take up places in the viewing stands. Surprised and disconcerted at seeing us, people in the crowd murmured, "What on earth is this?" and even some laughed derisively and jeered.

When we passed in front of the house of the guard commander, Yoshiyori,[488] it seemed that he was just about to move to his viewing stand. The gates were pushed open wide and people were standing around. Someone said, "That seems to be somebody going on a pilgrimage. And to think of all the other days they could have chosen." Amid those laughing at this, there was one—I wonder what was in his heart—who said, "What is so important about delighting one's eyes for a moment? With such fervent zeal, someone like that is sure to receive the Buddha's grace. Maybe we are the ones without sense. Giving up the sightseeing and making up our minds to do something like that; that is what we ought to be doing." So, there was one person who could speak with some sense of seriousness.

Not to be exposed to the eyes of others on the road, we had left while it was still dark; now, in order to wait for those who had left later to catch up and hoping that the alarmingly deep fog would lift a little, we stopped at the main gate of Hōshō Temple. There we could really see the crowds of people coming in from the countryside to sightsee; they flowed on and on like a river. Everywhere, it was hard to make way. Even some rather strange-looking urchins who seemed hardly old enough to understand things looked askance at our carriage forcing its way against the stream of traffic. There was no end to it. Seeing all these people, I even began to wonder why on earth I had set out on this trip, but concentrating my thoughts single-mindedly on the Buddha, I finally arrived at Uji. There too, there was a crowd of people wanting to cross over to this side. The boat helmsmen were in no hurry to make the crossings; they stood around, sleeves rolled up, leaning on their oars, looking quite arrogant as though they were not even aware of all the people waiting to cross. Looking around, singing songs, they appeared very smug. We were unable to cross for an interminable amount of time. When I looked carefully around me, I recalled the daughters of the Uji prince in Murasaki's tale.[489] I always had been curious about what kind of place it was where she had had them live. So this must be it, and indeed it is a lovely place. Thinking these thoughts, finally I was ferried across. Also,

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488. Eldest son of Fujiwara no Takaie (979–1044), brother of the late Empress Teishi.

489. These are the daughters of the Eighth Prince in *The Tale of Genji*, who moved to Uji after his residence in the capital burned down. The courtship of these sisters, the untimely death of the elder sister, and finally the installation of their half sister Ukifune at Uji by Kaoru make up the content of the so-called Uji chapters of *The Tale of Genji*. This remark also is evidence that the author of *The Tale of Genji* was being referred to by the nickname Murasaki by this succeeding generation of readers.

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when I went in to look at the Uji villa belonging to his lordship,[490] the first thing that sprang to mind was, "Would not the Lady Ukifune have lived in a place just like this?"[491]

Since we had left before light, my people were very tired, so we stopped at a place called Yahirouchi. While we were having something to eat, my attendants talked among themselves, "Say, isn't this the famous Mount Kurikoma?[492] It is getting on toward dusk. We had better get everyone ready to go." I listened to this with apprehension.

We made it over that mountain; just as we arrived in the area of Nieno pond, the sun was just setting over the rim of the mountain. "Now let us stop for the night," said my attendants, and they spread out to seek lodging. "It is not a very suitable place, but there is only this rather poor and shabby little house," they said. "What else can we do?" I replied, and so we ended up lodging there. There were only two rather seedy-looking men servants in charge, who said, "Everybody else has gone up to the capital." That night, too, I barely got any sleep. The men servants kept walking around in and out of the house. I heard the maid servants in the rear of the house ask, "Why on earth are you roaming around like that?" "What do you mean? Here we are putting up people we don't know at all. Suppose they were to make off with the cauldron, what would we do? We can't sleep for worrying, so we are wandering around keeping an eye on things." They spoke thinking we were asleep. Listening to this was both strange and amusing.

Early the next morning, we left there and went to pray at Todai Temple. The Isonokami Shrine truly looked as old as its name makes one imagine;[493] it is all wild and overgrown.

That night we stayed at a place called Yamabe. Although I was tired, I tried to read the sutras a little. I dozed off, and in a dream I saw myself visiting an amazingly beautiful and noble lady. The wind was blowing hard. She looked at me and smiled, "What brings you here?" she asked. "How could I not pay my respects?" I replied. "It is to be expected that you will live at the imperial palace. It would be good for you to discuss this with Lady Myōbu"[494] is what I thought she said. I felt very happy and putting much store by this dream, my

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490. This is the villa of Fujiwara no Yorimichi, Princess Yūshi's adoptive grandfather and therefore in a sense the author's employer. This is likely why she was able to tour the villa. Seven years after this date, Yorimichi rebuilt the villa magnificently and eventually had it consecrated as a temple, the Byōdō-in, which survives.

491. Another reference to the Uji chapters of *The Tale of the Genji*.

492. Mount Kurikoma was notorious for bandits.

493. Isonokami Shrine was in the village of Furu, a place-name homophonous with the words "to age" and the "passing of time." Hence it became an *uta-makura*, a poetic toponym for growing old.

494. Lady Myōbu is the mistress of the inner chambers of the imperial palace.

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faith strengthened more and more. We went along the Hatsuse River and that night arrived at the holy temple. After performing ablutions, we went up to the main hall. We stayed in retreat for three days. We were to start the return journey at dawn; night came and I dozed off. From the direction of the main hall came a voice, "You there, here is a sacred cedar branch bestowed by the Inari Shrine,"[495] and as the person appeared to reach out and throw me something, I woke up with a start and realized it was a dream.

At dawn, while it was still dark, we departed. We found it difficult to get lodgings that night but finally asked to stay at a house on this side of the Nara slope. My attendants talked among themselves, "This seems to be a suspicious place. Don't fall asleep at all. Something unexpected may happen. Whatever you do, do not look afraid or alarmed. Your Ladyship, please just lie here quietly." Just hearing this, I was miserable and afraid. I felt as though it took a thousand years for dawn to break. Finally, just as it began to get light, one of my attendants said, "This is the home of thieves. The woman who is our host acted suspiciously, you know."

On a day when the wind was blowing hard, we crossed the Uji River and rowed very close by the fish weirs.

oto ni nomi	Having only heard
kikiwatari koshi	of the sound of the waves
Uji kawa no	lapping against the
ajiro no nami mo	fish weirs of Uji River,
kyō zo kazouru	today, I can even count them.[496]

Since I have been writing consecutively in no particular order of events that were two, three or four years apart, it makes me look like a devout practitioner who was continually going on pilgrimages, but it was not like that; years and months separated these events.

The next section picks up the author's life around the year 1057, more than a decade after the pilgrimages just described.

In my life, one way or another, I had expended my heart on worry. As for my court service, how might it have turned out if only I had been able to devote myself to it single-mindedly? But since I went to serve only sporadically, it seems one could not expect it to have amounted to anything. I had gradually passed my prime and couldn't help feeling that it was unseemly for me to carry on as though I were still young. My body had become weak through illness, so I could no longer go on pilgrimages as I wanted. I had even stopped going out

495. The famous Inari Shrine at Fushimi, south of the capital.
496. The fish weirs at Uji were a favorite subject for poetry.

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on rare occasions. While I hardly felt that I should live much longer, nonetheless, everyday, lying down, getting up, I was plagued with the thought, "How much I wish to live long enough in this world to see the young ones properly settled."[497] Meanwhile, I worried anxiously to hear news of a fortunate appointment for the one I relied on.[498] Autumn arrived, and it seemed that what we were waiting for had come, but the appointment was not what we expected.[499] It was a pity to be so disappointed. It did seem as though his post was a little closer than the eastern circuit my father had seen going to and fro on a number of occasions. Anyway, what could we do about it? We hurried with preparations for his imminent departure. He was to make his formal start a little after the tenth day of the Fifth Month from the residence to which his daughter had just moved.[500] His departure was a lively affair with lots of people bustling around.

Our son accompanied him when he left for the provinces on the twenty-seventh day.[501] Our son, with a sword at his side, wore purple trousers of a twill weave, with a hunting cloak of the bush clover color combination over a red robe that had been fulled to a glossy sheen. He walked behind his father, who wore dark blue trousers and a hunting coat. At the central gallery, they mounted their horses. After the lively procession had departed, I felt somehow at loose ends with nothing to do. Since I had heard that their destination was not so terribly far,[502] I did not feel quite as bereft as I had on previous occasions. Those who had gone along to see the party off came back the next day and said, "They departed in great splendor." And when they said, "This morning at dawn, a really large soul fire appeared and came toward the capital,"[503] I thought surely it must be from one of his attendants. Did an inkling of this being a bad omen come to me?

Now all I could think about was how to raise the young children into adults. My husband came back to the capital in the Fourth Month;[504] summer and autumn passed.

On the twenty-fifth day of the Ninth Month, my husband fell ill; on the fifth day of the Tenth Month, he died.[505] I felt as though it was a bad dream; I could not imagine something like this happening. The image that had been seen in

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497. The three children that the author had with Toshimichi.

498. Toshimichi.

499. Toshimichi received a post as the governor of the province of Shinano (present-day Nagano Prefecture).

500. This is apparently an older daughter from an earlier marriage.

501. Their eldest son is about seventeen years old.

502. Shinano was a little more than half the distance to the east country.

503. "Soul fire" is the translation of *hitodama*, a bluish ball of light that was thought to depart from a person who was soon to die.

504. It seems that her husband was given permission to leave his post. His health may have been weakened by the severe winters of the mountainous Shinano region.

505. The text itself does not state explicitly that "he died" but merely speaks of feeling as though one were having a bad dream.

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the mirror offered to Hatsuse Temple[506] of a figure collapsed on the ground weeping; this was me now. The image of the joyous figure had never happened. Now, there was no hope of its ever happening. On the twenty-third day, the night when the evanescent clouds of smoke were to be kindled, the one whom I had watched go off with his father in such a magnificent costume now wore mourning white over a black robe and accompanied the funeral carriage crying and sobbing as he walked away. Seeing him off, remembering the other time—I had never felt like this before. I grieved as though lost in a dream; I wondered if my departed one could see me.

Long ago, rather than being infatuated with all those useless tales and poems, if I had only devoted myself to religious practice day and night, I wonder, would I have been spared seeing this nightmarish fate? The time that I went to Hatsuse Temple when someone in a dream threw something to me saying, "This is a sacred branch bestowed by the Inari Shrine," if I had just gone right then and there on a pilgrimage to Inari, maybe this would not have happened. The dreams that I had had over the years in which I had been told, "Worship the god Amaterasu" had been divined as meaning that I should become a nurse to an imperial child, serving in the palace and receiving the protection of the imperial consort.[507] But nothing like that had ever come to be. Only the sad image in the mirror had been fulfilled. Pitifully, I grieved. Since I had ended up as one without one thing going as I had wished, I drifted along without doing anything to accumulate merit.

Yet somehow it seemed that although life was sad, it would go on. I worried that perhaps even my hopes for the afterlife might not be granted. There was only one thing I could put my faith in. It was a dream I had had on the thirteenth day of the Tenth Month in the third year of Tenki.[508] Amida Buddha appeared in the front garden of the house where I lived. He was not clearly visible but appeared through what seemed like a curtain of mist. When I strained to look through gaps in the mist, I could see a lotus dais about three to four feet above the ground; the holy Buddha was about six feet in height. He glowed with a golden light, and as for his hands, one was spread open, and with the other he was making a mudra.[509] Other people could not see him; only I could see him. Unaccountably, I experienced a great sense of fear and was unable to move closer to the bamboo blinds to see. The Buddha deigned to speak, "If this is how it is, I will go back this time, but later I will return to

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506. A reference to the mirror her mother had had cast and sent as an offering to Hatsuse Temple in order to try to divine her future as a young woman.

507. Here readers are finally given the precise content of the hopes she had entertained for practical success in the world.

508. The year 1055 was three years before the death of her husband. This is the only time in the diary that the author gives such a complete date.

509. A sacred hand gesture.

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welcome you." Only my ears could hear his voice, the others could not. Such was the dream I saw when I woke up with a start. It was the fourteenth. Only this dream is my hope for the afterlife.

My nephews, whom I had seen morning and evening when we lived in the same place, had gone off to live in different places after this sad event had occurred, so I rarely saw anyone. On a very dark night, the sixth youngest nephew[510] came for a visit; feeling this was unusual,

tsuki mo idede	Not even the moon
yami ni kuretaru	has come out in the dark shrouding
obasute ni	Abandoned Aunt, to which,
nani tote ko yoi	with what on your mind this night,
tazune kitsuramu	might you have come visiting ?[511]

was what came spontaneously to my lips.

And to a friend with whom I had corresponded warmly before, but from whom I had not heard since I had come to this pass,

ima wa yo ni	Is it that you think
araji mono to ya	I am one no longer living
omouramu	in this world of ours?
aware naku naku	Sadly I cry and cry,
nao koso wa fure	yet I do indeed live on.

At the time of the Tenth Month, crying as I gazed out at the exceeding brightness of the full moon,

hima mo naki	Even to a heart
namida ni kumoru	clouded by tears that fall
kokoro ni mo	with no respite,

510. This reference has puzzled commentators because the author never before mentions having as many as six nephews.

511. Abandoned Aunt, or Obatsuteyama, literally, "the mountain where old aunts are abandoned," is an uta-makura, a poetic toponym with complex associations. Obatsuteyama is in the Sarashina District of Nagano and is famous both for its connection with the folk belief about an ancient custom of abandoning old women and for being a beautiful place to view the moon. The touchstone for the place-name's association with the moon is *Kokinshū*, no. 879: "My heart finds it hard to be comforted. Ah Sarashina! On Mount Abandoned Aunt, I see the bright moon shining." The place-name has a further personal association for the author because Sarashina and Obasuteyama are in the province of Shinano, the last posting for her husband. The traditional title for this diary, *Sarashina nikki*, is derived from this poem.

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akashi to miyuru	the light pouring from the moon
tsuki no kage kana	can appear so radiant.

The years and months change and pass by, but when I recall that dreamlike time, my mind wanders, and it is as though my eyes grow dark so that I cannot recall clearly the events of that time.

Everyone has moved to live elsewhere; only I am left at the old house. One time when I stayed up all night in gloomy contemplation feeling so bereft and sad, I sent this to someone I had not heard from for a long time.

shigeri yuku	The mugwort grows more
yomogi ga tsuyu ni	and more rank, the dew on it
sobachitsutsu	soaks through and through;
hito ni towarenu	not visited by anyone,
ne o nomi zo naku	my voice is only raised in sobs.

She was a nun and so replied,

yo no tsune no	Ah, yours is mugwort
yado no yomogi no	growing at an ordinary
omoiyare	dwelling in the world,
somuki hatetaru	imagine the clumps of weeds
niwa no kusa mura	in my garden of renunciation.

[Introduction by Itō Moriyuki and translation by Sonja Arntzen]

HEIAN LITERATI

In the Heian period, the ability to compose Chinese poetry and prose was a requirement for male officials. An earlier ideal (of which Sugawara no Michizane was perhaps the last major example) existed in which a person with literary ability was valued and rewarded in the world of bureaucracy and the court. This ideal was based on the belief that the ability to excel in belles lettres was linked to the ability to excel in government. But beginning in the tenth century with the dominance of the Fujiwara regency, this ideal existed only in name, and those officials who excelled in Chinese learning and belles lettres were not given an opportunity to rise in the bureaucracy or to be publicly rewarded for their talents. These men of letters, referred to here as literati (*bunjin*), tended to look at the sociopolitical hierarchy from the outside, with a critical eye. Among the literati leaders were Ōe no Asatsuna (886–957), Minamoto no Shitagō (911–983), Yoshishige no Yasutane (d. 1002), and Fujiwara no Akihira (989–1066), who appear in *Literary Essence of Our Country* (*Honchō monzui*).

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LITERARY ESSENCE OF OUR COUNTRY (*HONCHŌ MONZUI*, MID-ELEVENTH CENTURY)

The *Literary Essence of Our Country* is an anthology of Chinese prose and poetry by Japanese writers. It was edited by Fujiwara no Akihira (989–1066), a noted literatus and the author of *An Account of the New Monkey Music* (*Shinsarugakuki*) and *Akihira Letters* (*Meigō ōrai*). Following the model of the noted Chinese literary anthology the *Wen xuan* (J. *Monzen*), the *Honchō monzui* is a collection of texts written in Chinese over a two-hundred-year span, from 810 to 1037, divided into various genres and categories. The fourteen volumes of the *Honchō monzui* represent a radical change from the serious tone of the early Chinese poetry and prose anthologies, such as the Nara-period *Kaifūsō* (751). While pretending to be a model for composition practice, the *Honchō monzui* in fact is a compendium of eccentric, humorous, erotic, and even vulgar pieces, a characteristic development of mid-Heian kanbun culture.

ŌE NO ASATSUNA

Rhyme-Prose on the Marriage of Man and Woman (Danjo kon'in no fu)

"Rhyme-Prose on the Marriage of Man and Woman" is a good example of the erotic humor found in this kind of kanbun literature. Even though the text makes references to Ono no Komachi and Ariwara no Narihira, the well-known tenth-century poets and legends of classical love poetry, it supplies far more erotic and physical detail than was allowed in the elegant waka tradition.

Most virile of beings—man; gentlest creature—woman:
their love and affection will find a way to mingle, no matter how parents may prohibit and protect.
First he solicits the matchmaker, skilled in all the art a glib tongue can command,
then plies her with Japanese poems, bit by bit tangling the strings of her heart.
He seeks a glimpse of her face, so hard to see, listens for a voice as yet unheard.
As his yearning grows more fervid, he smiles a secret; as the talks grow more intimate, he feels his heart break.
"Like the jeweled tree in my garden, like the faithful pine," he gestures, "I vow to flourish!
Like the felicitous herbs in my room, like the golden orchid," he points, "I promise to be pure!"
And now bodies grow subtly mild, their wills little by little aroused,
she dwells in loveliness, in charms a match for Ono no Komachi,

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he speaking with a quiet elegance that would shame Ariwara no Narihira.
Their longings begin to race forth wildly; true passion now is born.
Her form resplendent, replete with all beauty, her posture tall and stately, with power to topple cities;
she dyes her crimson sleeve in a hundred scents till he has fallen slave to their fragrance;
wraps her white fingers tight about his hand and already he is lost in mazes of emotion.
A woman values her chastity, the completion that comes with the marriage right;
but when they've vowed to be true for a thousand years, she finds joy in the first night's union.
When the dew of dawn gathers, it wets her fresh new garments;
where night's pale moonlight falls, it lights her soft shining form.
Her eyebrows painted in willows of Wei, lips touched with rouge of Yen,
where once she hung silk curtains about her, bashful lest even her kin catch a glimpse,
now she turns the gauze lamp to the wall and suddenly snuggles up to a stranger.
What at first she only endures later becomes most familiar.
Unbinding the sash of her single robe, knowing she cannot tie it again,
baring flesh as white as snow, forgetting for once to be ashamed:
"He's the one I'm to be buried with, the mate I will share throughout all my life!"
When the form is lovely, love will be deep, when passion penetrates, the body will grow full:
not the union of husband and wife alone that counts, but the thought of sons and grandsons to rely upon!
He broaches the gate where moisture abounds, and fluids overflow to stain their undergarments;
they look about, but there's no one at the door: moans grow louder, impossible to still.
Love's raptures are hard to forebear—who among us is a saint or a sage?
The mutual response of yin and yang, this is the Creator's natural way.
And when hearts have subsided and rest in stillness,
they linger by Peachflower Paradise banks, forgetting to return;
after juices have freely flowed, they lie wrapped in dreams of a Heaven of Perfect Peace.
But thoughts once roused know no end, and longings may leave one sleepless and distraught;
should widows and young boys hear of such things, none but would be stirred to desire!

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MINAMOTO NO SHITAGŌ

Minamoto no Shitagō was a mid-Heian period poet noted for both his scholarship and his poetry in Japanese and Chinese. During the reign of Emperor Murakami (926–967), he was selected as one of the "five Nashitsubo (Pear Court) poets" who edited the *Gosenshū* (951), the second imperial waka anthology, and worked on deciphering the *Man'yōshū*. He also edited the *Wamyō ruijū shō*, a Chinese–Japanese dictionary. Shitagō was slow to rise in the bureaucracy, and he wrote a number of works lamenting his misfortune. For him, his learning and ability in Chinese poetry and prose did not lead to significant advantages in office.

Song of My Tailless Ox (O naki ushi no uta)

In "Song of My Tailless Ox," the poet defends an ox that has lost its tail in an encounter with a wolf. The simple tone and subject matter stand in comic contrast to the attempt to argue the "five virtues" of the ox. Shitagō implicitly satirizes a contemporary society and age that no longer values scholars and learning but treats them as useless. He also expresses his apprehension and bitterness at approaching old age in such untoward circumstances. This is an excellent example of comic Chinese poetry.

I have an ox but its tail is missing;
everyone pokes fun at my tailless ox.
Born a wild calf, it was chewed by a wolf,
but I well understand why it escaped the wolf's jaws;
it's so wise you'd take it for an old pine spirit,[512]
far plumper and bigger than those grazers under the fruit trees.
And though it lacks a tail, it has five virtues;
with your leave, I'll rap its horn and count them one by one.
(first virtue)
First, when it eats tender grass and turds come flopping down,
it has no tail to swish about and dirty up the shafts.
(second virtue)
Should it stray into a garden and rouse the owner's ire,
there's nothing he can tie a dead ox skull to.[513]
(third virtue)

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512. A reference to a Chinese legend concerning the spirit of an ancient pine tree that turned into a gray-green ox.

513. A note by the poet explains that if an ox wanders into a garden, the owner of the garden will tie an ox skull to its tail and make it run several miles.

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Again if it mingles with herds of cows in the broad meadow,
the herdboy can spot it far off without searching about.
(fourth virtue)
Black ox with dots of white hair on its back—
a wise man of old examined it and caught the thief.[514]
But in your case, to seize the scoundrel, determine the thief,
what need to scrutinize and report on hair?
Even a short tail might omen long life for the culprit,
but with you he's certain to end up in chains.
(fifth virtue)
Other people's sons and daughters race about in carts,
off on long trips to mountain temples, short ones to market taverns,
sometimes not returning till dusk or even the following day,
wearying the ox, wearing down the wheels, worrying the owner.
But because my ox has no tail, no one wants to borrow it—
though others laugh with scorn, I have no cares.
Tailless, tailless, hark to what I say!
Never have I used you to plow paddy or field,
nor driven you east and west, fetching and hauling,
and the rare times you hauled a load, I charged no fee.
It's not that I can't bear to see you put to work;
poor, I've forgotten how to make a living at farming or trade.
Old now, I stick to my post, though the stipend's skimpy,
and number in my household no lackey or groom.
In grass-green spring I have no sleep horse to straddle,
in snow-white winter I've trouble patching together a proper cloak.
True, you're here to pull me, but is that such a comfort?
Tailless, tailless, do you know what I mean?
In the age of the sages, they used loyalty, not wealth!
That's why I get up early, rest but little at night.
And if my worthless loyalty should win some paltry return,
I'll surely pay you for your years of hard work!

YOSHISHIGE NO YASUTANE

Yoshishige no Yasutane was born into the Kamo family, which specialized in yin–yang, but he pursued Confucian studies and became a low-ranking official.

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514. According to a Chinese monk, a man had a black ox with white markings on its back that was stolen. The magistrate thereupon offered to pay double the price for ox hides, and when one of that description was brought to him and identified by the owner of the ox, the thief was arrested.

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Yasutane also was a key figure in forming the Kangaku-e, a group devoted to the study of Buddhism. When he came into contact with Genshin, the author of *Ōjōyōshū*, he was exposed to Jōdo (Pure Land) Buddhism and finally took holy vows in 986. (Yasutane's Buddhist name is Jakushin.) Yasutane is representative of mid-Heian literati who, becoming disillusioned with the low position of the literati in the aristocratic sociopolitical hierarchy, turned to the alternative of reclusion and Pure Land Buddhism.

RECORD OF A POND PAVILION (CHITEIKI, 982)

"Record of a Pond Pavilion," written in couplet-based, parallel-prose kanbun and one of the most famous texts in the *Honchō monzui*, anticipates Kamo no Chōmei's *An Account of a Ten-Foot-Square Hut* (*Hōjōki*) by two centuries.

. . . So, after five decades in the world, I've at last managed to acquire a little house, like a snail at peace in his shell, like a louse happy in the seam of a garment. The quail nests in the small branches and does not yearn for the great forest of Teng; the frog lives in his crooked well and knows nothing of the vastness of the sweeping seas. Though as master of the house I hold office at the foot of the pillar, in my heart it's as though I dwelt among the mountains.[515] Position and title I leave up to fate, for the workings of Heaven govern all things alike. Heaven and earth will decide if I live a long life or a short one—like Confucius, I've been praying for a long time now.[516] I do not envy the man who soars like a phoenix on the wind, nor the man who hides like a leopard in the mists. I have no wish to bend my knee and crook my back in efforts to win favor with great lords and high officials, but neither do I wish to shun the words and faces of others and bury myself in some remote mountain or dark valley. During such time as I am at court, I apply myself to the business of the sovereign; once home, my thoughts turn always to the service of the Buddha. When I go abroad I don my grass-green official robe, and though my post is a minor one, I enjoy a certain measure of honor. At home I wear white hemp undergarments, warmer than spring, purer than the snow. After washing my hands and rinsing my mouth, I ascend the western hall, call on the Buddha Amida, and recite the Lotus Sutra. When my supper is done, I enter the eastern library, open my books, and find myself in the company of worthy men of the past, those such as Emperor Wen of the Han, a ruler of another era, who loved frugal ways and gave rest to his people; Bo Juyi of the

515. At this time, Yasutane held the post of *naiki*, or secretary in the Nakatsukasa-shō, a bureau of the government that handled imperial edicts, petitions, and other documents. "Clerk at the foot of the pillar" was a Chinese term for such a secretary.

516. When Confucius fell ill, one of his disciples asked to be allowed to pray for him, but Confucius replied, "I've been praying for a long time now" (*Analects*, 7:34).

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Tang, a teacher of another time, who excelled in poetry and served the Buddhist Law; or the Seven Sages of the Chin, friends of another age, who lived at court but longed for the life of retirement.[517] So I meet with a worthy ruler, I meet with a worthy teacher, and I meet with worthy friends, three meetings in one day, three delights to last a lifetime. As for the people and affairs of the contemporary world, they hold no attraction for me. If in becoming a teacher one thinks only of wealth and honor and is not concerned with the importance of literature, it would be better if we had no teachers. If in being a friend one thinks only of power and profit and cares nothing about frank exchange of opinions, it would be better if we had no friends. So I close my gate, shut my door, and hum poems and songs by myself. When I feel the desire for something more, I and my boys climb into the little boat, thump the gunwale and rattle the oars. If I have some free time left over, I call the groom and we go out to the vegetable garden to pour on water and spread manure. I love my house—other things I know nothing about.

Since the Ōwa era [961–964], people of the time have taken a fancy to building luxurious mansions and high-roofed halls, even going so far as to have the tops of the pillars carved in the shape of mountains and duckweed designs incised on the supports of the roof beam.[518] But though the expenditure runs into many millions in cash, they manage to live there barely two or three years. People in old times used to say, "The builder doesn't get to live in what he builds"—how right they were. Now that I am well along in years, I've finally managed to construct a little house, but when I consider it in light of my actual needs, even *it* seems somewhat too extravagant and grand. Above, I fear the anger of Heaven; below, I am ashamed in the eyes of men. I'm like a traveler who's found an inn along the road, an old silkworm who's made himself a solitary cocoon. How long will I be able to live here?

Ah, when the wise man builds a house, he causes no expense to the people, no trouble to the spirits. He uses benevolence and righteousness for his ridgepole and beam, ritual and law for his pillar and base stone, truth and virtue for a gate and door, mercy and love for a wall and hedge. Devotion to frugality is his family business, the piling up of goodness his family fortune. When one has such a house to live in, no fire can consume it, no wind topple it, no misfortune appear to threaten it, no disaster come its way. No god or spirit can peer within it, no thief or bandit can invade. The family who lives there will naturally grow rich, the master will enjoy a long life, and office and rank will be with it forever,

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517. Emperor Wen reigned from 179 to 157 B.C.E.; Bo Juyi (772–846), whose poems were greatly admired in Japan, wrote prose pieces that provided the model for this work by Yasutane; the Seven Sages of the Bamboo Grove were a group of Chinese poet-philosophers of the third century who gathered to drink, play the lute, and discuss philosophy.

518. The latter part of the sentence is a conventional Chinese expression indicating architectural extravagance and should not necessarily be taken literally.

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to be handed down to sons and grandsons. How can one fail, then, to exercise caution?

Composed and written in the hand of the master of the house, Yasutane, in the Tenth Month, the first month of winter, of the fifth year of Tengen (982).

[Translated by Burton Watson]

FUJIWARA NO AKIHIRA

Fujiwara no Akihira (d. 1066) was a mid-ranking scholar-official and one of the leading literati of the day. He presided over the state university and compiled *Literary Essence of Our Country* (*Honchō monzui*), a collection of poetry and prose, and *Akihira Letters* (*Meigō ōrai*), a collection of correspondence.

AN ACCOUNT OF THE NEW MONKEY MUSIC (*SHINSARUGAKUKI*, CA. 1050)

An Account of the New Monkey Music is a relatively short work written exclusively in Chinese between the 1030s and 1050s. It opens with an enthusiastic account of personally witnessed nighttime carnival entertainments—mimes, magicians, acrobats, dancing midgets, and other performers of "monkey music" (*sarugaku*)—which are direct predecessors of the nō drama that appeared in the fourteenth century. *Shinsarugakuki* then presents twenty-eight vignettes featuring the talents and foibles of an extended family of carnival-goers, including a certain lieutenant of the Right Palace Gate Guards, Uemon no jō, a mid-ranking official and probably a royal policeman (*kebiishi*).[519] His family includes three wives, sixteen daughters—plus sons-in-law and significant others—and nine sons. By the 1050s, when Akihira elected to use the comic mode to describe the sights and sounds of the popular carnival and the lieutenant's motley family, he may well have meant to advance a few steps further Yoshishige no Yasutane's earlier critique of the crowded conditions of the city in "Record of a Pond Pavilion."

A distinctive feature of the *New Monkey Music* is its lists, which entertain and instruct besides identifying the author as a scholar learned in the parallel forms of classical Chinese prose. The lists recall simpler catalogs found in primers like the *Kuchizusami*, compiled by the tutor Minamoto no Tamenori in 970.[520] In contrast to Sei Shōnagon's elegant lists in *The Pillow Book*, the lists in the *New Monkey Music* are neither

519. The Uemonfu, or headquarters of the Right Gate Guards, was established in the early ninth century. The *uemon no jō*, or third in command at the headquarters, might have held either the seventh or the sixth rank. By the tenth century, members of the Emonfu and Hyōefu patrolled the streets of the capital at night and served as Royal Police agents during the regency era. Fujiwara no Akihira once served in the Uemonfu and in the Royal Police.

520. Marian Ury, "Chinese Learning and Intellectual Life," in *The Cambridge History of Japan*, vol. 2, *Heian Japan*, ed. Donald H. Shively and William H. McCullough (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 348–355.

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simple nor elegant; rather, they are meant to amuse and teach while illustrating the author's broad knowledge of the capital.

In twentysome years of walking about and observing both the east and west capital districts, I have never seen anything like what I saw this night, when I went out to watch *sarugaku*. Performers included exorcists, dancing midgets, field-planting musicians and dancers, and puppeteers; there was sleight-of-hand, whirligigs, juggling, mimes doing solo sumo wrestling and backgammon, and boneless and stick dancing. There was the pompous stride of Endō, the chief district magistrate; the dainty footwork of Ebisuki, the shrimp-catching attendant; the hitched-up pants of a clerk from Higami (in Tanba); and the fan-covered face of an auntie from Yamashiro. There were tales sung by *biwa*-strumming minstrels, prayers for long life by skilled toastmasters, drumming sounds from the rib cage of a man slapping his full belly, and the taut neck of a dancer representing a praying mantis. The rich preacher Fukkō sought a fancy sash beside the holy nun Myōkō begging for a diaper, and a gaunt-faced clerk appeared with a jaunty chamberlain from a nobleman's entourage. There was the decrepit body of an elderly court dancer, the painted face of a shrine prostitute, and street urchins jeering at an easterner's first visit to the capital. Then there were the accompanying musicians and the troupe's priest-manager. With all the skilled acts and comic lines, you could hardly avoid splitting your belly and dislocating your jaw with laughter.

And yet superior and inferior are not the same, and it is worth explaining the difference. Hakuta performed with miraculous aplomb—he was without equal, past or present. Jinnan gains the affection of the audience wherever he appears to do sarugaku. Jōen is the god of humor—one look at his antics and you split your belly. Keinō is the sage of sarugaku: those in the crowd dislocate their jaws before he even opens his mouth. In contrast, the master of Agata no Ido looks good, but his speech is uncouth and he sometimes flubs his lines. The Sesonji cleric has talent but talks too long and makes everybody yawn. Sakanoue no Kikumasa starts out cold but warms up toward the end, while Modoribashi no Tokutaka starts off full of verve only to run out of jokes. Ōhara no Kikutake lacks understanding of the art—he has lots to say but leaves the audience cold. Ono no Fukumaru is nothing but a beggar—he shouldn't be included here. So of late there are only four or five players who really mesmerize audiences. That's why everybody—clerical and lay folk, males and females, the noble and the base, the high and the low—bombarded the players with clothing and other tokens that streamed down like rain. Having given away their clothes, some went home naked, while others were embarrassed and crawled away like dogs. When the sky was cloudy and rain fell as morning came, people bundled straw for rainwear and tore off sedge leaves for umbrellas. Some hitched up their pants and walked just like monkeys; others ran like storks, hiking up their underrobes. Others, covering themselves with tatami, fell face first in the mud, and still others wrapped themselves in straw mats only to tumble into the canal.

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There's no counting all the people who enjoyed these entertainments. Among the onlookers was a certain lieutenant of the Right Outer Palace Guards from the west capital accompanied by his entire family, including three wives, sixteen daughters, and nine sons. Among them, some are better and others worse, but each surely has his or her own talent.

His original wife is already sixty years old and has finally begun to lose her looks. But her husband, who is only fifty-eight, is a real womanizer. Long ago, when he was twenty and an official, he was overwhelmed by the wealth and power of his in-laws. More mature now, he reflects on the past and regrets having married an older woman. The hair on her neck is hoary just like frost in the morning, while the wrinkles on her face ripple like waves in the evening. Her upper and lower teeth have fallen out, giving her the face of a pet monkey. Her breasts hang down like a bull's testicles in summer. Even when she makes herself up, there is no one to love her—she's just like the moon shining on the coldest winter night. When she plays the coquette, even more people are put off—she's like the glaring sun on an early summer's day. Unaware of her own decrepit state, she constantly begrudges her husband's lack of interest. She makes offerings to her patron deity, Shōten (Ganapati), the god of marital bliss, but to no apparent effect. She also propitiates her personal talisman of the deity of fecundity, but with meager results. At the Man Festival at Igatome on Fox Hill, she thumps her genitals and dances; and at the love rites at Akomachi on Fox Mountain, she nuzzles the phallic symbol with joy. She offers a thousand rice cakes to the guardian deity on Fifth-ward Avenue and gives a hundred baskets of rice to the night demons at the East Temple. Clapping and dancing she visits a thousand shrines and runs around donating a hundred cloth offerings. As regards her husband, she has the jealous eyes of a writhing serpent and the enraged countenance of a glaring demon. Tears of desire wash away the powder from her face, while flames of grief scorch her insides red. She ought to shave her head and become a nun, but clinging to her fleeting existence, she has been transformed into a huge viper. Still, despite her many flaws, she is the mother of [his] many children, so what is there to do?

The next wife is the same age as her husband. She's no rival to China's Xishi but doesn't have any real flaws either. She has a placid temperament, adjusting to circumstances like liquid to its vessel. She can be assertive or compliant, like clouds trailing in the wind. Moreover, in sewing, dyeing, weaving, spinning, supervising the household staff or commercial concerns, keeping accounts, and running the household, she can not be praised too much. In the morning and evening she serves food as his heart desires; and in summer and winter she lays out apparel appropriate to the season. The lieutenant has his wife's know-how to thank for his residential wear—cap, hunting robe, trousers, lined robe, inner robe, outer robe, pajamas, unlined robe, pantaloons, and outdoor wear; and for his daytime livery—hat, outer robe, vest, undertrain, inner trousers, outer trousers, sash, sword, scepter, fan, shoes, and socks; and for his saddle, bow and quiver, as well as his retainers and servants.

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The third wife is the friend of a certain court lady with powerful connections. She is eighteen years of age, with a fair countenance and a plump, impetuous face. Relying solely on her feminine charms, she has never learned the ways of the world. She remains aloof and has no concern for the hustle and bustle of daily life. Although her husband is in public service and entrusted with official duties, when he talks about her he forgets them all. Although he propitiates the Buddha and the deities, nothing is more important than her when he is with her. In her company his furrowed brow becomes smooth and his angry countenance turns gentle. A touch from her instantly heals his hurts while the sight of her quickly relieves his suffering. He fills the night and day with their love play—he could gouge his eyes out without feeling pain and throw his wealth away without the slightest regret. Neither water nor fire, nor wind nor rain, keep him away. He ignores everyone's gossiping and closes his ears to the jealous words of both his other wives. To him, this young wife is better than an elixir of youth or eternal life.

The eldest daughter's husband is a famous gambler. He is a master with the shaker—the dice fall as he bids. Gaming-table incantations flow from his silver tongue, and he excels in the arts of strategy. He surpasses even Enkan Michihiro at rolling "fives and fours" and "fours and threes," cutting lines on the board, executing the Chinese roll, and at handling all kinds of shakers, dice, special techniques, and dice-game arguments. He's a descendant of the famous gamblers Budōda and Chikutōjō. People call him Bitōta, although his given name is Sukeharu. His eyes are narrow, and with his pug nose his face looks like a peach pit. He has all the qualities of a gambler: readiness to gamble, capital to bet, skilled hands, vigor, strength, a competitive nature, and the capacity for theft and murder.

The husband of the next daughter is the number-one fighting man in the realm. He excels at battles, night attacks, shooting at the enemy from horseback, ambushes, hunting in the dark, standing target practice, shooting from a gallop, mounted target practice, hat shooting, galloping target practice, practice with multiple targets, three-foot targets, and handheld marks. He's heaven gifted in the arts of donning armor, carrying bow and arrow, taking up a spear, using a sword, and at unfurling a banner in the wind, planting a shield, forming a battle line, and leading troops. He is quick of hand and courageous of heart, and whenever he enters a fight he emerges victorious. So far, he has never experienced the shame of surrender. He wields the expert bow of Yang Youji and the virtuous quiver of the one who shot down the golden crows.[521] You can truly

521. Yang Youji, a noted archer from the state of Zhu, was able, according to the *History of the Han*, to hit a willow leaf from a hundred paces and score a hundred hits for every hundred shots he took. The one who "shot down golden crows" refers to Yi, or Yi Yi, the most famous archer in ancient China. According to one legend, in the *Huainanzi*, following the orders of the sage king Yao, Yi shot down nine suns, which fell down as golden crows.

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say that he is worth a thousand men. I don't know his family name but his nickname is Gen. People say he is called Kuntōji.

The husband of the third daughter, the acting lieutenant governor of Dewa, Tanaka Toyomasu, makes his living exclusively in agriculture—he needs no other income. He is a big field-boss, a patriarch whose managerial and tax-collecting authority extends over several acres. He prepares his plows and hoes according to the availability of water; and he mends his horse- and ox-drawn plows according to the condition of the soil. He is good at looking after the field hands when they are busy preparing dams, dikes, ditches and paddy ridges; and he knows how to reward cultivators who sow seeds, raise them, plow the fields, and transplant the seedlings. He produces early- and late-ripening strains of rice, nonglutinous and glutinous. And in every case, the ears he harvests are superior, so the amount he polishes increases yearly. In his upland fields he sows barley, soybeans, cow-peas, azuki beans, fox-tail millet, ordinary millet, barnyard millet, buckwheat, perilla, and sesame, all of which ripen to the very last grain. If in spring he puts a single grain in the ground, in autumn he collects it in his storehouse multiplied ten-thousand-fold. From the spring planting until the autumn harvest, he doesn't make a single mistake. So he always knows the joy of ripened crops and a bounteous harvest, experiencing no loss from drought, flood, insects, or failed crops. He doesn't shirk when feeding surveyors and tax collectors or serving up feasts for traveling officials. And he has never shorted land rent, provincial taxes, grain taxes, taxes in rice or handicrafts, property surtaxes, provisions for government agents, supplies, local tribute products, saké money, sowing expenses, administrative expenses, commercial fees, labor payments, interest on rice loans, or other disbursements. Although he's not so good at meeting his obligations to get tax stuffs transported, he's better than those poor folks who are always fawning after their betters and begging for clemency. . . .

The seventh daughter obsesses over food and loves wine. What are the delicacies she craves? They include steamed rice with quail eyes, gruel with toads' eyes, chopped mackerel, pickled sardines, grilled whole sea bream, and carp barbecued on a skewer. Among the vegetarian dishes she prefers malodorous fermented leeks, barbecued radish, salty fermented soybeans, parboiled and sesame-marinated greens, and awful-looking *matsutake* mushrooms. For sweets she likes steamed rice cakes without bean filling, doughy dumplings, soft ripe plums, and overripe cucumbers. To drink she takes raw saké, and as a side dish, she prefers roasted beans. When her husband is at her side, she fawns over him like a cat with her claws hidden. But at meal times she goes wild, licking her chops like a canine. That's why, despite her comely appearance, she wanted to become the wife of a lender of horses and carts. Her husband is Ochikatabe no Tsugoro—his proper name is Tsumori no Mochiyuki. He gallops to Ōtsu and Mitsu ports in the east and to Yodo and Yamazaki crossings in the west. He never takes a day of rest, even when sores break out on the necks of his oxen.

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He won't give up a single trip even when his horses' backs get bowed. He's always arguing over package fees or the shortage of carts. He lacks manners and never bows, and he doesn't take care of his workers, either. There is not an hour when he takes off his straw sandals, and there is never a day when he puts down his whip. The soles of his feet are cracked like Yamashiro eggplants just after a frost, and his legs are chapped like Yamato melons under the sun. His only purpose in life is to sustain his wife and children with the flesh and blood of his oxen and horses. Still, it is the seventh daughter who has given the household a bad name. . . .

The third son, Master Saburō, is a renowned cabinetmaker and woodcraftsman. He's good at making such wooden products as small utility boxes, boxes for inkstones, wooden box-pillows, comb boxes, cabinets, trunks, legs for screens, frames for folding screens, lamp stands, stands for Buddhist icons, offering tables, sutra-reading tables, tall chairs for Buddhist clerics, altar risers, large trays, serving trays with legs, and elbow rests. He also makes saddle frames, frames for fans, quivers, decorations for long swords, long-handled parasols, handmade flowers, and rattan articles. There's no one to compare with him in good taste and craftsmanship. The dexterous efforts of his ten fingers keep his household prosperous, and his four-inch blade supports his five-foot frame.

The fourth son, Lord Shirō, is an exemplary retainer for provincial governors and serves as their whip-carrying lieutenant. There is nowhere in the Five Inner Provinces and Seven Circuits that he hasn't been, nowhere in the sixty-odd provinces that he hasn't seen. On board ship he can calculate the wind and tides, while on horseback he knows his way along mountain paths. He's not clumsy with bow and arrow, and he's good at accounts. Once he's entered a province, he knows all about such things as the protocol for entering the headquarters, visiting shrines, ceremonies for assuming office, systems for successful administration, arrangements for ending a term of office, how to compile the final accounting, and how to draft formal opinion statements. Although there are some as good as he is, none are better. Thus he is appointed deputy in charge of the provincial headquarters; or he is made director of the tax office, the records bureau, the local defense squad, the police office, the survey office, the storehouse, the remittance office, the carpenter's bureau, the repairs office, the stabulary, the attendants' office, the kitchen, or the secretariat; or he is entrusted with duties as surveyor, tax collector, exchange specialist, field overseer, or special assessment agent even though he didn't request such assignment. Without unduly harassing the residents he manages to collect taxes, and he's good at insuring his noble boss against losses while ensuring his own profit at the same time. Since everybody does just as he says, his residence is always bustling—it is full of produce gathered from every province and is extremely prosperous. There is silk from Awa; silk floss from Echizen; eight-foot bolts of cloth from Mino and persimmons, too; figured silk cloth from Hitachi; finely woven silk from Kii; spotted cloth from Kai; pongee from Iwami; paper from Tajima; sumi ink from Awaji; combs from Izumi; needles from Harima; swords

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from Bitchū; small utility boxes, whetstones, bamboo blinds and sardines from Iyo; woven cushions from Izumo; round cushions from Sanuki; cruppers from Kazusa; stirrups from Musashi; kettles from Noto; pots from Kawachi and bean paste as well; lumber from Aki; iron from Bingo; cows from Nagato; horses and paper from Mutsu; pears from Shinano; chestnuts from Tanba; glutinous rice from Owari; carp from Ōmi; oak and pulverized rice cakes from Wakasa; salmon and lacquer from Echigo; small dried fish from Bizen; mackerel from Suō; shad from Ise; abalone from Oki; small eggplants from Yamashiro; melons from Yamato; seaweed from Tango; pulverized rice cakes from Hida; and rice from Tsukushi. One after another, carts carrying all kinds of tribute products arrive, provisioning an abundant market, it is said. So on the mornings when new postings are announced, all manner of folk, whether intimates of the household or not, seek audience with him. . . .

Although there was naturally a multitude of people high and low who came out to see the sights that night, the household of the lieutenant of the Right Outer Palace Guards was the main attraction. And so have I written it down.

The text was copied in the last third of the First Month of 1286 by the seeker after the law Ichi'a of Upper Daigoji. On the eighteenth day of the First Month of 1293, Kaiken finished marking the text (for reading in Japanese) after checking it against various manuscripts.

[Translated by Joan R. Piggott]

LATE HEIAN AND EARLY KAMAKURA MONOGATARI

The stories in the late Heian and early Kamakura periods are marked by their parodic and allusive nature, which makes them different from other short-story forms such as the sections (*dan*) found in poem tales like *The Tales of Ise* or the anecdotes. The contemporary aristocratic readers and writers of these monogatari shared their knowledge of earlier monogatari and their conventions, which become the source of variation, parody, and allusion. Significantly, *The Tale of Genji* was repeatedly mimicked and parodied, creating seemingly endless variations on this masterpiece. A noted characteristic of late Heian and early Kamakura monogatari is that at a time when the aristocracy was rapidly losing economic power and social status, the beleaguered aristocracy looked back to the Heian-court monogatari (and to a world that had become more ideal than reality) with detachment and irony as well as as a form of escape and fantasy.

THE STORIES OF THE RIVERSIDE MIDDLE COUNSELOR (*TSUTSUMI CHŪNAGON MONOGATARI*, CA. TENTH–FOURTEENTH CENTURIES)

The Stories of the Riverside Middle Counselor consists of ten short stories, which are not in a fixed order. The exact date of the stories is unknown but is thought

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to range from as early as the tenth century to as late as the fourteenth century. Only one of the short stories, "The Middle Counselor Who Could Not Cross Ōsaka," can be reliably dated. According to one record, it was presented by Koshikibu, a lady-in-waiting (*nyōbō*), at a monogatari contest sponsored by Princess Baishi in 1055.

The late Heian and early Kamakura monogatari assume a certain detachment toward the content of the Heian monogatari, making them the object of laughter and irony. If *aware* (pathos) was the pervading tone of the Heian-court monogatari, that of *The Stories of the Riverside Middle Counselor* and other late Heian monogatari mix in subtle and ironic humor. Significantly, "The Lady Who Preferred Insects" (Mushi mezuru himegimi) begins with the phrase "the lady who was fond of butterflies," which embodies the opposite of the protagonist. Fondness for butterflies represented the typical good taste of Heian aristocratic ladies, an attitude that here is inverted to reveal the underside of such a world. In fact, almost all the protagonist's views are either an implicit critique of or a form of resistance to aristocratic aesthetic and social standards, with the protagonist seeking her own individuality and identity in contradiction to these norms. Like many of the other protagonists of the late Heian and early Kamakura periods, the protagonist appears ill, highly eccentric, or otherwise "extreme," but it is in the context of a worldview that is, as it were, being turned inside out. The world of *The Stories of the Riverside Middle Counselor* also depicts the middle and lower levels of the aristocracy, as opposed to the middle and upper levels that *The Tale of Genji* portrays.

Although the *Mumyō-zōshi*, an early Kamakura critique of monogatari, mentions several Heian monogatari, it never cites *Tsutsumi chūnagon monogatari*. Indeed, it was not until the Tokugawa (Edo) period that the title *Tsutsumi chūnagon monogatari* became widely known. All surviving copies of it are from the Tokugawa period. Research on the text began with Keichū (1640–1701) and was continued by later scholars of nativist studies (*kokugaku*). It was not until the Meiji period (1868–1911) that it became part of the literary canon.

The Lady Who Preferred Insects (Mushi mezuru himegimi)

Next door to the lady who was fond of butterflies lived another lady, daughter of the Lord Inspector. She had been reared with uncommon love and attention. She said: "It is silly of people to make so much of flowers and butterflies. They would do far better to inquire seriously into the nature of things." Indiscriminately she gathered ugly specimens. "We will observe how they grow and change," she said, putting her specimens in cages in which she could observe them. "See how serious and intent the caterpillars seem to be." Her hair tucked out of the way behind her ears all the day long, she would hold them affectionately in her hand and gaze intently at them.

Her women being afraid of them, she gathered urchins of the lower orders who were afraid of nothing. She had them take out her insects and tell her their

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names, and when they had none she would invent names for them. It was her view that people should live the natural way. Against all common sense, she declined to pluck her eyebrows, and said that blackening the teeth was troublesome and unsanitary. Smiling an uncompromisingly white smile, she doted on her insects morning and night. Because her women were constantly fleeing, her room was in great confusion. Life was not easy for them. She was forever berating them and glowering at them through her thick black brows.

"Why can't she be like other girls?" her parents would say. "But she must have her reasons. It is all very strange. When you speak seriously to her the answers are sensible enough. So it is not that she is merely stupid." They were quite at a loss.

"This is all very well. But think what people are saying. They like a girl to be pretty. It does not do to have them say that you are devoted to repulsive caterpillars."

"I don't care in the least. Things make sense only when you observe and watch them develop. People are silly. A caterpillar becomes a butterfly." And she showed them how it was happening. "The silk that we wear is made by worms before they have wings. When they take wing it's all over." They had no answer.

Yet she was a lady. She did not address her parents openly. Devils and women were not to be looked upon. She would raise the blinds of the sitting room slightly and set out a post curtain, and thus discreetly receive them.

Her young women heard it all. "She may love her caterpillars, but they drive us to distraction. How pleasant it must be to work for the lady who likes butterflies."

A woman called Hyōei offered a poem:

> Am I to leave before she sees the light?
> A caterpillar is not that forever.

Laughing, a woman called Kodayū answered:

> Happy they with flowers and butterflies.
> For us it is the stench of caterpillars.

"How sad. Her eyebrows are genuine caterpillars. And her teeth are naked."

Said a woman called Sakon:

> "So many furry creatures all about—
> we will survive the winter without coats.

and so, we may hope, will she."

Material com direitos autorais

An irritable old woman overheard. "And what are you children babbling about? I don't think it so fine that the lady next door likes butterflies. Indeed it seems stupid. Who could call a row of caterpillars a row of butterflies? The point is that they shed their skins and become butterflies. Watching it happen is a serious matter. When you take up a butterfly you get that nasty powder all over your hand. And you might get an attack of ague too. Isn't that reason enough to avoid butterflies?"

But this view of the matter only added to the shrillness of the criticism.

The boys meanwhile were kept busy. Knowing that there would be rewards, they brought in all manner of horrid creatures.

"The fur of the caterpillar is so interesting. Why don't the poets and the storytellers have more to say about it?"

The boys brought her mantises and they brought her snails, and sang loud songs about them, and the lady sang the loudest. "Why do the horns of the snail do battle?"

Thinking the names of her boys rather dull, she renamed them after specimens in her collection: Cricket, Toad, Mayfly, Grasshopper, Centipede.

Word of all this spread abroad, and there were extravagant rumors. One young man, son of a high courtier, dashing and gallant and handsome as well, said that he had something to frighten her with. He took a cutting from a fine sash and shaped it into a most life-like snake, even contriving that it would move. He put it in a pouch with a scale pattern and a drawstring and attached a poem to it.

> Crawling, crawling, it will stay beside you,
> telling of a heart forever steadfast.

As if it were nothing, a serving woman brought it to the lady. "There is this pouch. So heavy you can hardly open it."

The lady did open it, and the snake raised its head. Though all her women were hysterical, the lady was calm.

"Praise Amida Buddha, and let it be my guardian through this life. There is nothing to raise such a stir about." Her voice quavered and she looked away. "It is wrong to admire something only while it is beautiful." She brought it to her side, but she did after all seem uneasy about it. She jumped up and she sat down again, like a butterfly over a flower. Her voice was like a cicada's. Beside themselves with mirth, her women left the room. They reported these happenings to her father the Inspector.

"This is inexcusable. You have left her alone with the creature?"

Sword in hand, he rushed to her side. The snake was very realistic. He took it up and examined it.

Material com direitos autorais

"He is certainly very clever. He has played this trick on you because you are a scholar and connoisseur of insects and such. You must get off an answer immediately."

And he departed.

"What an unpleasant fellow," said the women, learning of the contrivance. "But indeed you must answer."

The answer was on stiff, inelegant paper. Not yet up to the flowing feminine script, she wrote in the angular masculine one.

> "Perhaps we are fated to meet in paradise.
> Uninviting is this form beside me.

Until then."

A most unusual letter, thought the man, who was a cavalry officer. "I must see her."

He consulted with a friend, a certain captain of the guards. Disguising themselves as women of the lower orders, they visited the Inspector's house at an hour when he would be away. They looked in through a crack in the partition to the north of the lady's room.

A boy stood in the undistinguished plantings. "This tree is crawling with bugs. I never saw anything like it. Come have a look." He raised her blind. "The best swarm of caterpillars you could hope to find."

"How splendid," she answered in a strong, clear voice. "Bring them here."

"There are too many. See. Right here. Come on over."

She emerged with a firm, masculine stride. Pushing the blind before her she gazed wide-eyed at the caterpillar branch. She had a robe pulled over her head. The flow of the hair was good, but, perhaps because it was untended, it had a bushy untidiness. The black eyebrows were rich and cool, though the whiteness of the teeth was disconcerting.

"She would be pretty if she took care of herself. What a shame."

Clearly she neglected herself. Yet she was not at all ugly, and gave an impression of fresh elegance, and a cleanness as of a summer sky. The pity of it all. She was wearing a figured robe of pale yellow, a cloak decorated with grasshoppers, and white trousers.

She leaned forward to examine the caterpillars. "How very nice. But we can't leave them out in the sunlight. Come, men. Herd them inside. Don't let a single one get away."

The boy shook the branch and they fell to the ground.

"Put them on this."

She offered a white fan on which someone had been practicing Chinese characters. He did as ordered.

Material com direitos autorais

The two young men looked on in amazement. The master of the house was a learned man, and he had quite a daughter. More, perhaps, than he could manage.

A boy espied the pair. "A couple of handsome young men [are] hiding behind that shutter. An odd-looking couple they are too."

"How awful," said Tayū. "There she is, chasing after those bugs of hers, completely exposed to the world. I must warn her."

Outside the blind as before, the lady was in a great stir getting caterpillars from leaves.

"Come inside." The woman was afraid to go near. "Someone might see you, way out there."

"What difference does it make?" said the lady, sure that this was merely a device to distract her.

"You think I'm lying? I'm told there are two fine young men behind that shutter. See, out there in back."

"Go have a look, Cricket."

"It's true," said the boy, running back.

Putting some caterpillars in her sleeve, the lady hurried inside.

She was neither too tall nor too short. Rich hair fell to the hem of her robe. Because the edges were untrimmed, it did not fall in perfect tresses. Yet it was good after its fashion, and rather charming.

Even someone less favored, thought the cavalry officer, could easily pass muster. She may not seem very approachable, but she is pretty and elegant, and there is a certain distinction even in her eccentricities. If only she did not have that peculiar hobby. It would be a pity to run off and not even let her know he had seen her. Using the juice from a grassy stem for ink, he set down a poem on a fold of paper:

> Having seen the fur of the caterpillar,
> I wish that I could take it for my own.

He tapped with his fan and ordered a boy to deliver it. The boy gave it to Tayū, saying that it was from the gentleman over there, for the lady.

"Frightful." Tayū was loud in her complaints. "I know who it's from. That cavalry man. Because of those stupid bugs you let him see you."

"When you look into the nature of things, there is nothing in the world to be ashamed of. This life of ours is a dream. Who can tell what is good in it and what is bad?"

What was a person to say? The women were in despair.

The young men waited, thinking there would surely be an answer. Presently, to their disappointment, all the boys were called inside.

There seems to have been at least one woman who saw the need for an answer. It would not do to have them wait in vain.

Bahan dengan hak cipta

I am not like others. Only having heard
the name of the caterpillar do I wish to answer.

To this the cavalry officer replied:

Like the fur of the caterpillar, possibly,
there is no other who matters so much as a hair.

Laughing, he departed.
We will learn more of the lady in the next chapter.

[Translated by Edward Seidensticker]

THE TALE OF SAGOROMO
(*SAGOROMO MONOGATARI*, CA. 1060)

The Tale of Sagoromo follows the adventures of Sagoromo, a young courtier of such superior looks and talents that gods and spirits seek out his company and emperors attempt to conscript him as a son-in-law. A heavenly prince, the bodhisattva Fugen, the Kamo god, and even the Kamo Shrine itself intervene during the eleven-year span of the narrative to praise the hero or to promote his interests. By the end of the tale, as the *Mumyō-zōshi* memorably complains, Amaterasu has intervened to raise Sagoromo to the status of emperor despite his second-generation commoner status.

These high-profile figures provide a framework for idealizing the hero and complicating the plot's true concern: Sagoromo's several romances, almost all of them tragic. The most important of these affairs is Sagoromo's unrequited love for his foster sister, Princess Genji. The tale opens with the hero yearning for her in his garden and closes soon after she leaves him forever to serve as the priestess of the Kamo Shrine. Sagoromo's sobriquet, which refers to his proverbially narrow bachelor's robes, comes from a poem in which he refuses another bride. Sagoromo's love for Princess Genji, in fact, constrains all his affairs, because although he continues to pursue various women, he refuses, for her sake, to commit to any of them.

Nonetheless, it is the secondary heroines—especially the Second Princess (daughter of the reigning emperor) and an impoverished aristocrat called Asukai—who dominate the action of the plot. Sagoromo pursues them obsessively, albeit in secret, and despite his constant threats to take the tonsure, it is only after these women have slipped irretrievably from his grasp that he actually steals off to a temple to try to become a priest. Even at the end of the tale, when Sagoromo has married a surrogate for Princess Genji and installed her as his empress, he continues to regret these lost loves. His final actions are to offer a memorial service for Asukai, long dead, and to visit the Second Princess, now a nun living outside the capital.

Perhaps it is not surprising, then, that Asukai actually displaced Princess Genji as the favorite heroine for medieval readers of *Sagoromo monogatari*. Echoing the timid

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character and tenuous positions of Yūgao and Ukifune in *The Tale of Genji*, Asukai seems to have captured the sympathies of her early readers. Many of *Sagoromo*'s notorious textual variants pay particular attention to Asukai's story. Some emphasize the social gap between the lovers, while others denigrate secondary characters to make the heroine appear even more sympathetic.

Asukai became even more prominent in the Muromachi-period tributes (1392–1573) to the tale. While the Second Princess also fared well, inspiring at least one nō play, Asukai and her story were resurrected in numerous *otogi-zōshi* (Muromachi tales), which expanded her adventures into *The Story of Sagoromo* (*Sagoromo no sōshi*). Princess Genji, by contrast, did not survive outside the original tale.

In short, Sagoromo's affair with Asukai, part of which is translated here, is in many ways the most memorable part of the tale. Drawn to Asukai by her social distance, the hero cannot understand that this social gap makes her doubt his commitment, especially since he continues to hide the affair out of deference to Princess Genji. For her part, Asukai cannot bring herself to confess her worries to Sagoromo, and so the lovers continue to misread each other. This mutual misunderstanding, embodied most dramatically in their poetry exchanges, offers an ironic contrast to the lovers' oft-stated karmic connection. Perhaps it also testifies to a late Heian skepticism about the power of words to bridge any spiritual or social gap.

The Tale of Sagoromo was written in the 1060s by Minamoto no Yorikuni's daughter Senji (ca. 1020–1092), the wet nurse to Princess Baishi (1039–1096)—a Kamo Shrine priestess and the adopted daughter of the regent Fujiwara no Yorimichi (d. 1074)—probably after Baishi retired from the Kamo Shrine in 1058 as a result of illness. Both Yorimichi and Minamoto no Morofusa (Yorimichi's brother-in-law), Baishi's chief sponsors, died in the mid-1070s.

The Tale of Sagoromo is often referred to as "the second *Tale of Genji*." The nickname comes from *Sagoromo*'s earliest readers, many of whom, like the author of the early Kamakura monogatari treatise the *Mumyō-zōshi*, considered it to be the best tale written after *Genji*. A few readers even credited the authorship of *Sagoromo* to Murasaki Shikibu's daughter. The phrase "the second *Tale of Genji*" also suggests *Sagoromo*'s special textual relationship to *Genji*, which it both imitates and departs from, as in the poetic technique of allusive variation.

The Story of Asukai

Near dusk, at the intersection of Nijō and Ōmiya, Sagoromo and his men spotted a woman's cart, equipped with a spare ox for what had obviously been a long trip.[522] As the cart drew nearer, Sagoromo glimpsed a shaved head through the window. A priest seemed to be staring out at them! The cart raced

522. Women's carts typically featured long blinds that trailed outside, alerting onlookers to the gender of the occupants even from a distance.

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past before Sagoromo could get a second look, but his men had apparently seen enough to become suspicious, and they overtook the vehicle and began to interrogate the driver. "There's a priest inside that cart! What's he doing behind women's blinds?" "Who does he think he is, cutting us off like that! You should have let us pass first!"

The driver, a young boy, shook slightly as he tried to explain. "The cart belongs to a priest from Ninna Temple, but he's not here now. His mother borrowed it for a pilgrimage to Uzumasa, and I was just taking her home when the ox bolted and dragged us in front of you."[523]

Sagoromo's men were skeptical. "Really? Then she won't mind if we take a look inside?" Just as they raised the blinds, a priest jumped out of the back of the cart and ran off, hiding his face in his stole. "Hey Sister, where do you think you're going?"[524] The younger men started after him, but Sagoromo called them back before they could catch him. Disgusted, they went back to grilling the driver. "All right, now who was that? Tell us the truth this time!"

"He's some kind of teacher from Ninna Temple." The boy was too frightened to lie any longer. "He's been pursuing this woman for a while now, and when she finished her retreat at Uzumasa today, she asked him if she could borrow his cart to go home. Well, he helped her into the cart—and then jumped in after her and told me to get moving! A priest! I bet the Buddha got mad at him and sent you to teach him a lesson. I knew I should have tried to rein in the ox and let you pass, but the priest kept yelling at me to go faster, saying that you'd let us by because it was a woman's cart. I guess he was in a hurry to be alone with her after dreaming about it for so long. Anyway," he concluded anxiously, "it wasn't my fault. I've spent so much time around priests that I've practically memorized that verse about 'following one's master,'[525] so I just did what he said. But I'm never following him again!" He looked so frightened that the men felt sorry for him and went back to report to Sagoromo.

"So, it looks like there really is a woman in that cart," they informed him, "but everyone else has run away. It kind of makes you feel sorry for her, being abandoned like that."

"It's your fault for getting involved in the first place!" Sagoromo retorted. "Why don't you ever listen to me? Now I suppose we're going to have to fix this mess. Go find out where she lives and take her home."

Things were not, however, that simple. Before Sagoromo could leave, the men were back with more questions. "The boy says she lives somewhere here on Ōmiya, but he doesn't know which house it is, and now that it's getting dark,

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523. Ninna Temple and Uzumasa (the site of pilgrimages) were west of the capital.

524. The men literally call the priest a "nun," since he has been pretending to be a woman.

525. The source of this phrase, which refers to the veneration that a disciple owes a teacher, remains uncertain.

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she's really weeping. What should we do? Sooner or later, somebody's bound to come looking for her, but the priest could be hiding around here, too, and we didn't bring any torches." By now they were anxious to go, but Sagoromo, feeling sorry for the woman, hesitated.

"I wonder what she's like," he thought, staring at the cart. Whoever she was, if she really had been kidnapped, she must be feeling desperate, and he couldn't just leave her like this. But then again, he sighed, what other choice was there? He didn't know where she lived, and if he brought her home, there was sure to be gossip. For a moment he smiled to himself, remembering how the priest had scuttled away with his stole over his face. No, he decided, it would be cruel to desert her like that. Perhaps he would take her home with him. But then a sickening idea occurred to him. What if the priest had put his hands on her during that long trip from Uzumasa? No, he could not invite her "to lodge at Asukai"[526] with him.

Sagoromo was still curious about the woman, however, and so he had his men bring him back to the cart, and he got inside. By now it was quite dark; in the cramped compartment he could just discern a small figure slumped on the floor, evidently hiding her tears beneath a large robe. "You must be terrified," he began, kindly. "I don't care who that priest is; deserting you like this is unforgivable. He obviously wasn't one to seek 'deep in Yoshino,' was he?[527] And to leave you alone so late at night, too . . . if I weren't here, who knows what could happen. You'd better let me take you home—unless, of course, you'd rather wait for him to come back. I'm sure he's around here somewhere. Just tell me and I'll get out of the way."

Sagoromo meant to be helpful, but his solicitude only made Asukai feel worse. He was, after all, a stranger, and although she was terrified at the thought of being left behind, she couldn't bring herself to speak to him, nor would she have made much sense if she had, since she wasn't very clear herself about where the house was. Instead, she continued to cry, looking so helpless and endearing that Sagoromo felt his earlier aversion begin to waver. "So, then, you do want me to leave," he pressed, trying to gauge her reaction. "I thought that you might need some help after all you've been through this evening, and now

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526. Sagoromo thinks of the following *saibara* (folk song): "Let us lodge at Asukai; oh, the shadows are fine, the waters are cool, the rushes are fine." The song celebrates the fine shelter and fodder to be found at Asukai, a celebrated way station. He alludes to this song because he is considering offering the woman lodging at his own home for the night, although he decides against this for fear of a scandal. The woman alludes to the same song a few pages later when Sagoromo decides to spend the night at her residence. As a result, the place-name Asukai has come to stand for this heroine, referring to both her physical charms and her symbolic role as a diversion from the hero's fruitless love for Princess Genji.

527. Sagoromo alludes to Fujiwara no Tokihira, *Kokinshū*, Miscellaneous, no. 1049: "Even if you hide deep in Yoshino, far off in China, would I be far behind?" The hero contrasts his sincerity with the cowardice of the priest.

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here you are still weeping. Well, don't worry. That priest is probably around here somewhere, but I won't let him get you."

This time, Sagoromo got his answer. Fear of the priest shocked Asukai out of her indecision, and she became almost glib with details about the shabby house that she had earlier been too ashamed to describe. "I think it's off of Ōmiya on one of the side streets," she choked through her tears, "across from one of the senior courtiers, with a bamboo grove nearby. . . . Do you think you could find it?" The voice, sweet and somehow refined, intrigued him, and he decided to stay with her and see where she lived. He had his men take the reins of the cart, and they set off in search of the landmarks she'd indicated.

In the end, they found the house without too much trouble. The house faced east from Ōmiya toward Horikawa, with cheap wooden shutters on all sides and a small, cramped gate.[528] Sagoromo had one of his men knock, but when he asked Asukai what to say to the gatekeeper, she lapsed back into tears. "I guess you didn't want my help after all," he complained, trying to provoke a response, but it was to no avail. Finally he had his driver simply say that they had come from Uzumasa.

"Good timing." The man didn't bother to question them further. "The people inside were just worrying that the young lady hadn't come back yet." As he spoke, a cloud of smoke from the mosquito coil he'd been burning inside his small room drifted out over to the cart. Sagoromo, used to grand buildings and incense, was fascinated and took the occasion to comment on the strange appeal of the situation in general.

> Will my heart send more smoke into the sky,
> passion-lit like mosquito coils beneath this strange roof?[529]

Asukai, on the other hand, who had gradually come to her senses, was painfully self-conscious. Sagoromo's company was a world away from the repulsive behavior of the priest, and she began to reflect wretchedly on what this genteel stranger would be thinking of her, bedraggled as she was and at such an address. Her conclusions were not encouraging, and despite her earlier terror, she began to regret having let Sagoromo bring her home, torturing herself over what he might think.

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528. Horikawa is the next major avenue east of Ōmiya. Sagoromo and his family also live along this street, albeit at a more fashionable address. The narrator underscores both the lovers' strange connection and their social distance.

529. Sagoromo alludes to *Kokinshū*, Love 1, nos. 488 and 500: "My passion seems to fill the empty sky; I send her my heart but it finds no rest" and "Summer brings insect coils burning indoors; how long must my heart smolder for her?" Sagoromo unconsciously betrays his devotion to Princess Genji by recycling a recurrent metaphor from his poems to her: smoldering embers.

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Once Sagoromo's men had brought the cart up to the house, a vulgar-looking woman of fifty or so came rushing up to meet them, carrying a ridiculously bright lamp. "What took you so long? Was the driver late? Did Tai no kimi come with you?" Sagoromo, repulsed by her uncouth demeanor and hoping to avoid a scene, urged Asukai to step out of the cart before the woman could come any closer. Asukai, humiliated by this latest indignity, refused to budge, moving only when Sagoromo actually took hold of her robes and forced her to sit up.

She was wearing an old crimson robe of soft, raw silk, with a lavender layer underneath, both garments now limp and wrinkled from her fits of tears, and the hair near her face was matted and wet. But the rest of her thick locks hung prettily down her back, and her embarrassed expression was in its way quite charming. Sagoromo felt an attraction, and he was just congratulating himself on having helped her, despite the adventure's strange beginning, when he remembered the priest. What if that old lecher had taken advantage of her? Unable to shake the idea, he decided to test her. "Now that you are home, I suppose you will send me on my way like some stranger; that explains your silence. Well, I may not be as pleasant company as that priest, but I hope you will not forget me entirely. Say that I can at least see you in secret, like 'a bow from Adachi.'"[530]

Mortified, Asukai tried to step out of the cart, but he caught hold of her sleeve and held her there. "You have no answer for me, then?" he persisted. "It seems I am right. If you were grateful for my help, you would have at least asked me to stay until daybreak." He refused to let her go until, exhausted, she finally whispered:

> I cannot ask you in, not at our Asukai;
> no shadows here can give you rest.

Sagoromo had never been one for casual affairs, but listening to the sweet voice, he had the strange feeling that the two of them had been fated to meet. How else, he wondered, could he explain his reluctance to leave? Swallowing his doubts, he countered her poem with one of his own:

> I could hardly leave Asukai's shadow unseen—
> but complaints might come from the reeds, I think.[531]

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530. An allusion to *Kokinshū*, no. 1078: "If I draw this bow from Adachi, from far Michinoku, fly to me forever—in silence, in secret." Sagoromo suggests his interest in Asukai but betrays the ambivalence that makes it impossible for her to trust him. This is the first of a series of Asukai poems evoking Michinoku, the distant northeastern region, which suggests her low status.

531. Sagoromo implies that the priest is hiding nearby, waiting to join Asukai after he leaves.

Bahan dengan hak cipta

"Let us wait at the house, at least until my carriage comes." He deliberately stepped out of the cart, pulling her, charming despite her tears, alongside him.

The sight brought shrieks from the house's residents. "It's a man! Who is he?" Determined to wait for his carriage as he had planned, Sagoromo ignored them and made Asukai join him on the veranda, where they sat looking up at the hesitant moon as it peeked out from behind the clouds.[532] Sagoromo, stroking her hair in the moonlight, lent his own radiance to the scene, and as Asukai grew calmer she became almost eerily attractive. The rest of her household, still watching them from inside, seemed to be in an uproar.

Before long, Sagoromo heard his men call that the carriage had come. Worried that the priest would surface and spirit her away, he impulsively took Asukai into his arms and began to shower her with affectionate promises. Soon they were on quite intimate terms, although his dismayed lover would have greatly preferred to know his name first. Sagoromo, however, took the very suddenness of their affair, along with its strange inception, as proof of its inevitability, a conviction strengthened by the discovery that the priest had not touched her after all. "It must have been my own karma," he thought in astonishment, "that made him kidnap her in the first place so that we could meet!" The idea betrayed how attractive he found her, and since her rough lodgings also held a certain novelty for him, he returned to see her frequently, coming every night as soon as the sun had set and sneaking home at daybreak through the heavy morning dew.

Although Sagoromo did not know it, Asukai was actually the daughter of a former government official, a middle counselor who had once headed the imperial outpost at Dazaifu.[533] Both her parents had died when she was quite young, and for a number of years she had lived with her nurse, then married to someone in the Tax Ministry who was fairly well off.[534] When the nurse's husband died, however, the two women fell on hard times, with things becoming so desperate that the nurse decided to ask a priest she knew at Ninna Temple for help. He agreed to look after Asukai, but not being an especially pious man, before long he decided to steal her away for himself. That night, when the ox driver went to the house and told the nurse what had happened, she had been stunned. "I can't believe he would do something like that! Who saved her?" Just as she was sending the boy back to find out, Sagoromo and Asukai arrived, and so the affair began.

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532. The moon of the sixteenth night (lunar calendar), which was much awaited.

533. Appointment to Dazaifu (in Kyushu) often equaled political exile for upper-level nobility, a misfortune that might explain Asukai's financial straits. The detail implies that she is noble by birth, making her worthy of Sagoromo's interest. He does not learn of this extenuating circumstance until after her death. Readers at least, however, are reassured.

534. The nurse's husband was in charge of the Kazue no ryō, part of the Ministry of Popular Affairs (Minbushō).

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Since then, the nurse had not received a single word from the priest, and she was at a loss as to what to do about it. Although she was disgusted by the man's sordid behavior, she had nowhere else to turn for help, and so she finally tried to contact him. Much to her disappointment, he refused to reply. "And what am I supposed to do now?" she grumbled to Asukai one day, embarking on the usual litany of complaints. "If he won't help support you, I don't know what we'll do. Maybe you should go to work for Princess Genji; I hear that a lot of girls are joining her service these days, now that she's going to marry the crown prince. Lots of them are from good families, too—but I'll bet none of them is as pretty as you. Yes, that's it—you go work for the princess, I'm sure they'll take you. Goodness knows I can't do anything for you on my own like this. Besides, I'll probably be leaving the capital soon. And by the way," she asked abruptly, "just who is this gentleman who's been coming to see you so much lately? He's been acting pretty mysterious with the rest of us, but surely you know his name by now."

Asukai responded with a flood of tears. "I know nothing about him. Why would he reveal himself to someone like me?"

The nurse sympathetically started crying herself. "The other night when he came by, he had to wait while we opened the gate, and his men threatened to send for 'the old policeman' to come help us. Some of us were wondering if he might be the police chief's son, the lesser counselor. In fact, some of the staff were so worried that they've just stopped coming, and we've been short-handed ever since."[535] Brooding over this inconvenience, the nurse suddenly became quite sharp. "I don't care how wonderful he is. You know, if he's going to be sneaking around in disguise all the time, what good is he to us? I'm an old woman now, and I can't just wait and hope that he'll make up his mind. There's a man I know who's been asking me to move out east with him, and I'm thinking I'd like to, too, if I could just get you settled. You really are getting to be a burden."

Asukai grew frantic at the suggestion that the nurse might leave her. "Take me with you!" she begged. "I will go anywhere; you know I could never manage on my own. How can you talk of leaving like that? As you have said, we cannot expect *him* to help, even if he does visit every night." The nurse felt a little bit guilty about making her so unhappy, but she herself had nowhere else to turn, and the situation was getting desperate. Yes, she thought quietly, maybe she would join the general in Michinoku.[536]

Sagoromo, meanwhile, continued to visit Asukai, and the more he saw her, the more he liked her. His affections were obviously genuine, and although even he had to admit that there was nothing very special about her, he could

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535. Some of Asukai's associates may be so poor that they resort to crime to survive or these officers may have had an unpleasant reputation at the time.

536. Michinoku referred to the area of northeast Honshū.

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not help sensing in his feelings for her something like the hand of fate. Indeed, he visited her so faithfully that his men were astonished. "Well, this is unprecedented!" they marveled privately. "She must be a real Kichijōten to keep him this interested."[537] "Maybe so," others objected, thinking of the dilapidated old house, "but she doesn't seem to be doing too well otherwise, does she?" Those who had been with Sagoromo the night he met Asukai, meanwhile, could not believe that this was the same woman. Try though they might, they could not understand what Sagoromo could see in her.

For her part, Asukai's nurse was busily packing up her things. "Maybe I shouldn't leave you here," she admitted through guilty tears, "but now that you've got someone coming to see you like this, I can't just take you away from him. Have you thought about how you'll manage the place when I'm gone?"

"You know I am helpless on my own!" Asukai pleaded, barely able to speak. "How can you abandon me like this? Please, take me with you!"

The nurse hesitated. "Well, then, I guess you'll have to come with us—but I don't think it's a very good idea, dropping a steady suitor for some miserable life in the provinces. Then again, I'm not going to give up my own chances and stay here just to make you happy, and even if I did, you know, there's no guarantee that things would get any better. Look what happened with the priest!" She sniffed scornfully. "Come to think of it, that lover of yours hasn't been much good to us either, even if he does hang around here day and night." She continued to dwell on this point for some time, carrying on with her packing as she did so.

Asukai, who wept even at ordinary partings, grew increasingly forlorn as the preparations continued. However much she disliked Sagoromo's secrecy, she could not bring herself to doubt his affection, and as his visits continued, she quietly fell very much in love with him. She brooded morbidly over their dwindling time together, too shy even to hint to him about the move. Sagoromo, noticing her grief, could only assume that she resented his continued silence, but although he sympathized with her, he was still wary of making their relationship public. Instead, he tried to cheer her up by making a game of it. "Tell me *your* name first," he would tease her, "even if you are just 'a fisherman's daughter.' Maybe then I will reveal mine."[538] Naively assuming that time would

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537. Kichijōten, a goddess revered for her beauty, is also associated with wealth. The men's comment suggests both her fortune (in obtaining Sagoromo's love) and, ironically, the poverty that makes her an unsuitable partner for him.

538. Sagoromo alludes to *Wakan rōeishū*, vol. 1, no. 722: "Passing the years on a surf-pounded shore, the fisherman's child knows no true home." There is also the echo of Ariwara no Yukihira's famous verse in *Kokinshū*, Miscellaneous 2, no. 962: "Should someone someday ask for me, say that I waste away in Suma, shedding the seaweed's salty tears." The allusions reprise Asukai's doubts about the affair (she had earlier claimed she had no proper home to which to welcome him) and reaffirm Sagoromo's ambivalence. A similar set of allusions appear in the "Evening Faces" (Yūgao) chapter of *The Tale of Genji*.

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prove his sincerity, he contented himself with passionate vows, going so far as to imagine himself another Nashihara poet.[539] And so summer gradually passed into fall.

Here the narrator briefly describes one of Sagoromo's visits to Princess Genji, this time interrupting a go match between the princess and Sagoromo's mother. Frustrated by the polite but chilly reception, Sagoromo suddenly thinks of Asukai and imagines her lying awake in the moonlight, waiting for him. He goes to her for consolation, only to discover, yet again, that his feelings for her have an intensity all their own.

Sagoromo saw that he was right. The shutters were still raised, and Asukai herself was lying out on the veranda, staring up into the sky and looking miserable. He took her into his arms and tried to comfort her, but even as he did so, he could not help remembering how beautiful Princess Genji had looked that afternoon. "Why did I get involved with this woman?" he thought, looking sadly at Asukai. "She could never make me happy. I should never have let things go this far." Guilt stricken, he wondered what would happen to her if he gave up on love altogether and became a monk, something he had been considering for some time now. Yes, he told himself, he should end the relationship now before he became too attached to make a clean break. But part of him balked at the idea. "How can I give her up?" he agonized, frightened by the strength of his feelings. "How could I last a day without her?"

Now crying, Sagoromo repeatedly assured Asukai of his sincerity. "These feelings are new to me," he insisted, brushing the tears from his eyes. "But for some reason, ever since we met, I can't seem to get you out of my mind. And you—would you miss me if I renounced the world and left you forever? I know that people say that it is 'best then to part,' but I would give anything if we could spend more time together."[540]

Watching Sagoromo in the moonlight, Asukai suddenly had a disturbing revelation. "He looks just like that young courtier that everyone talks about! How can I expect someone like that to take me seriously, when I can hardly hold up my head in the capital? I should leave him now, before he abandons me, and follow 'in the wake of the wild geese.'"[541] Smothering her tears in her robes, she whispered:

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539. Nashihara was a celebrated way station. The verse is *Fuboku wakasho*, Miscellaneous, no. 14884: "There is nothing I love so well as you; like Nashihara's stables, nothing outshines it." Note that Sagoromo, while wishing to stress his passion, associates their love with inelegant things (stables) and lesser places.

540. Sagoromo borrows a line from *Kokinshū*, Love 4, no. 717: "Those whose love still lasts should part—that way the memories will linger." Both allusions foreshadow the affair's tragic finale.

541. The allusion comes from *Yoshitadashū*, no. 507: "On mornings when dew rests on bush

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Like *hanakatsumi*, reeds "half seen," we hardly see each other now;
what, then, when Asaka Marsh dries up forever?[542]

There was nothing special about her as she recited the poem, but Sagoromo was deeply moved nonetheless.

This love runs deep, I promise you;
come what may, Asaka Marsh will never dry.

"I know that I may not seem reliable, but eventually you will see how much I care for you. Please trust me. Even if my behavior seems strange, my feelings for you are real."

Listening to his tender assurances, Asukai found it increasingly difficult not to mention the move. "Maybe I should suggest it," she wavered, "and see how he reacts." But she knew how precarious her prospects there were, and she hated to have him imagine her miserable convoy out on the rough eastern roads. No, she resolved, there was no way to know when Ausaka's jeweled waters would meet again, and she would rather lose him than reveal how low she had sunk.[543] "He will think of me as heartless," she grieved, picturing him searching for her through the empty house, "but even so, perhaps he will remember me." She succumbed to her tears. Sagoromo, watching her with pity, came to his own conclusions. "She must be worrying about me again," he thought. "There must be no one else she can rely on; if there were, she would never have fallen into the hands of that priest. And now she has a lover who refuses even to tell her his name. She cannot trust me." He redoubled his efforts to comfort her, this time comparing his love to "the oaks on Mount Tokaeru."[544]

Sagoromo and Asukai have a few similar meetings after this one. After seeing Princess Genji, the hero tries to tell himself that she is his true love, only to return to Asukai

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clover's lower leaves, even the wind fanned by wild geese is frightening." Asukai, likening herself to easily dispersed dew, here resolves to follow her nurse to the provinces. The comparison also reveals her fear of the journey and subtly foreshadows the affair's denouement.

542. Asukai's poem evokes *Kokinshū*, Love 4, no. 677: "Like *hanakatsumi* in Asaka Marsh, far off in Michinoku, will my love reach one still 'half-seen'?" The name of the plant *hanakatsumi* implies *katsumi* (half/hardly seen). Once again, and despite the specific reference to love languishing in distant places, Sagoromo fails to understand Asukai's point.

543. This line contains a complicated series of puns involving Ausaka (Meeting Hill) Barrier, the proverbial gateway to the provinces, and its waters (*nagare*). While metaphorically describing the two lovers, *nagare* also suggests Asukai's lineage. Asukai refuses to tell Sagoromo where she's going or where she's been, a failure that mirrors Sagoromo's own silence.

544. The image comes from *Shūishū*, Miscellaneous Love, no. 1230: "On Mount Tokaeru, where hawks nest, the oaks may change, but I will not." The allusion underscores Sagoromo's ambivalence toward Asukai, since in addition to its faithless oaks, Mount Tokaeru evokes another kind of inconstancy (the molting of feathers) by both name and association.

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(occasionally via other women). While understanding her fears, he remains unwilling to formalize the affair. By now fairly certain of Sagoromo's identity, Asukai thus continues to doubt his feelings and to struggle with her own. She does not even confide in him when she conceives his child.

Ultimately, it is Asukai's nurse who breaks this deadlock. After initially relenting and agreeing to remain with Asukai in the capital, she becomes frustrated with Sagoromo (whom she does not recognize) and arranges for Asukai to wed a lower-ranking courtier—as it happens, one of Sagoromo's men, now leaving his service for a new post. Realizing that Asukai will never consent to the marriage, the nurse tricks her into getting into an ox cart, which then takes them to a waiting boat. Before Asukai knows what is happening, she finds herself en route to Tsukushi (northern Kyushu) with an ardent suitor and an increasingly angry nurse on her hands. The suitor's gift of a fan bearing Sagoromo's inscription pushes Asukai to the breaking point. While Sagoromo has nightmares in the capital, Asukai rouses herself from her shipboard berth and resolves to demonstrate her love for him in the only way she has left—by killing herself.

She cautiously lifted her head and looked around. Everyone else seemed to be asleep, and she realized with rising excitement that this was her chance: she could finally leave it all behind her. At such a moment, one might miss even enemies, and she now found herself overwhelmed with longing for Sagoromo. She had been a fool, she realized, to think that "she would forget" or that "he would not visit."[545] She tried to stand but instead floundered in a sea of tears, and for a moment she hesitated, gazing out onto the open sea. The sky was utterly clear, without a wisp of cloud, and a glittering moon was slowly tracing its arc across the heavens. The waters stretched forward as far as she could see, and as she watched the waves come rolling in, she noticed a boat off in the distance. She could just hear the cries of the sailors as they navigated the Mushiake Straits.[546] Two poems suddenly formed themselves in her mind:

> Hoping our waters might converge, I cast myself into the waves,
> awaiting him, adrift, in the Mushiake Straits.
>
> Whitecaps, returning whence I came,
> tell him there we two can meet, in the water's depths.

She remained frozen in place for a time, sleeves pressed to her streaming eyes, but the thought that someone might stop her finally galvanized her will.

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545. Asukai thinks of an anonymous verse, supposedly sent by a wife to her husband as he traveled in the provinces, in *Kokinshū*, Parting, no. 377: "We cannot know, but if we live, let's see who'll pass the test: will I forget you, or will you forget to visit?" Only now, miles away from Sagoromo and ready to die, does she realize that she can trust him. While she has clearly not forgotten Sagoromo, no visit from him seems forthcoming.

546. The straits lie between the coast of Bizen (modern-day Okayama) and the island of Nagajima.

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Trembling, she pulled a pair of loose trousers over her robe and smoothed her hair. As she reached down toward her pillow, her fingers accidentally brushed Sagoromo's fan; her heart racing, she picked it up. Through her tears, she could just make out the bold lines of his calligraphy, the ink as fresh as if he had just written it. She had a fleeting vision of his face and realized that they would never meet again. What would he be doing right now, she wondered, during her final moments? Was he sleeping? Awake? Perhaps he was lying restless in bed, thinking of her. Agitated, she took up an inkstone and, using the small shelf along the gunwale as a desk, added her own poem to the fan despite her tears and shaking hands:

> Beneath these rapids, sunken deep, among the watery weeds—
> that's where he'll find me, fan-blown breeze, if you but tell him so.

Asukai was still reciting her poem when she sensed someone approaching. There was no time to lose. Gazing into the water's depths, terrifying though they were, she prepared to jump—but it was too late. Someone had taken hold of her sleeve. Dismayed, Asukai felt herself fainting, unable even to cry out when she was picked up and carried onto another ship. Through the fear and confusion, she saw that the sun had risen. Yes, she thought dully, she had missed her chance.

Asukai's long-lost brother, a half-blind priest, decided, after decades in Kyushu, to visit an aunt living in the hills east of the capital. After rescuing Asukai, the priest convinces her not to take any drastic measures until she gives birth to her child, and he takes her to live with the aunt. He then continues on his own pilgrimage. At Kokawa Temple (in modern-day Wakayama Prefecture), he unexpectedly encounters Sagoromo, who, believing Asukai dead and Princess Genji beyond his reach, has finally decided to take the tonsure himself. Sagoromo's resolve is so firm—and his sutra chanting so beautiful—that the bodhisattva Fugen himself appears to the assembled company.

When Sagoromo learns that Asukai is still living, his religious resolve disappears. He decides to have the priest take him to her, but the man is called away before he can reveal her whereabouts, and Sagoromo is unable to find the priest. Just when Sagoromo has given up hope, he learns that Asukai had been living in Tokiwa (east of the capital) and that she died after giving birth to his daughter. He goes there immediately, hoping to find at least the child as a souvenir of his lost love.

As he approached the mountains, he could hear the faint echo of Buddhist prayers, no doubt, he noted morosely, for her. He had thought when he saw the fan and her poem about the "watery weeds" that he had shed all his tears, but now he found that he still had some left.[547] Finally they came to the house,

547. In another scene omitted here, the brother of Asukai's suitor, also in Sagoromo's service, obtains the fan and returns it to Sagoromo. Sagoromo, realizing what must have happened, promotes this man but never speaks to the brother again.

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enclosed by a simple wooden fence. Sagoromo sent in one of his men to find Asukai's brother.

The man quickly returned and led them a short distance from the house to a rough hut, little more than paper screens, where the priest was waiting to greet them. Sagoromo thought he saw something of Asukai in the priest's features, although he hadn't noticed much of a resemblance before. "After that dreamlike meeting at Kokawa," he began accusingly, "I searched everywhere for you. It almost seemed as if you were hiding from me, but I was determined to find you, even if it meant fighting my way 'through forested foothills.'[548] Then, all of a sudden, someone came to me this morning and told me where you were, and I rushed here immediately. Why did you leave that night, after you swore that you would guide me in the faith forever?"[549]

The priest tried to placate Sagoromo's mounting resentment. "That night, after I left you, I suddenly learned that my sister was very ill, perhaps on her deathbed. I know that we had agreed to meet the next day, but I thought that if I waited, I might never see her again. She had begged me, before I left on my pilgrimage, to let her take the tonsure, and I could not let her die without honoring that request. There was no time to leave you a note explaining everything. She died shortly after I returned, and since then I have been offering prayers for her soul, hoping at least to give her comfort in the next world. Tomorrow we will hold the forty-ninth-day services."[550]

Tears poured down Sagoromo's cheeks as he listened to the priest. "When we met at Kokawa, I wanted to ask you about her, but there were too many people around that night, and then, when I went to look for you the next morning, you were gone. For a long time I felt worse than if we had never spoken at all, but something forced me to come here this morning—and now you tell me that she is dead." He pressed his sleeves to his eyes, fighting to stay calm. "I should have left things as they were."

The priest was shocked to learn that Sagoromo had known his sister, and despite his aversion to such worldly passion, he found himself wishing that she could have lived to see it. "It must have been Fate that brought me to her in the end," he reminisced quietly. "I had not planned to return to the capital, but my aunt, who had been married to an official in Chikuzen, kept insisting that I come to visit her when she moved back here after his death, and I finally

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548. Sagoromo alludes to Minamoto no Shigeyuki, *Shinkokinshū*, Love 1, no. 1013: "The foothills, the wood hills of Mount Tsukuba are thickly forested, but when I wished to enter them, nothing stood in my way." The allusion duplicates one made by Kaoru at the beginning of the "Azumaya" (Eastern Cottage) chapter of *The Tale of Genji*, and so Sagoromo may be quoting *The Tale of Genji*.

549. At their first meeting, Sagoromo had made the priest promise to be his religious teacher.

550. The forty-ninth day after a death was commemorated with special prayers for the deceased.

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gave in.[551] I had thought to stop in and see her on the way to Mount Hiei, but coming up from Tsukushi I encountered the assistant governor's procession and spotted my sister on one of the boats.[552] You would have been horrified if you had seen her then. She was determined to die, and when I stopped her, she begged me to at least give her the tonsure, as if something had completely turned her against the world. Since she was expecting a child, I told her to wait and brought her here to live with our aunt, but while I was away at Muroto in Tosa, she somehow managed to take orders anyway.[553] I do not know what happened after that, since I was away training at different temples, but they tell me that she pined away until she died." Since Sagoromo still seemed dissatisfied, he excused himself to find Asukai's aunt, who had been with Asukai until the end.

After speaking with the aunt, Sagoromo learns that his daughter by Asukai has been adopted by a princess back in the capital. He begins visiting the princess in order to see the child, only to find himself forced to marry her as a result of court gossip. The marriage is an unhappy one, and later that year Sagoromo, still mourning Asukai, returns to Tokiwa and arranges a spectacular memorial service. The narrative ends Asukai's story years later with another service, this one prompted by the discovery of her diary, but the earlier rite in some ways provides the more memorable finale. In this passage, partially translated here, Asukai and Sagoromo enjoy a final lovers' meeting.

At the end of the year, Sagoromo sponsored a memorial service for Asukai at Tokiwa. He decided to make it a lavish affair, with an unusual number of sutra recitations and particularly fine decorations for the altar, both as a tribute to his own feelings for her and, if possible, to speed her rebirth in paradise.

On the day of the ceremony he secretly went to Tokiwa. He had enlisted the head abbot from Mount Hiei to expound the sutras, with sixteen additional priests and seven liturgists seated in prayer before the altar. Many of them marveled at the magnificence of the display and the profound grief it betrayed, and when Sagoromo tearfully approached the altar to offer his petitions, the entire assembly found itself weeping with him. Sagoromo, mourning in earnest, finally broke down completely; lately, anything even vaguely reminiscent of her, even old poems and tales, brought him to tears. The shocked company could only wonder at the identity of the deceased and at the cruel fate that had stolen her from him. And so the service continued, each segment more splendid than the last and altogether beyond description.

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551. Chikuzen, in Kyushu, now part of Fukuoka.

552. The priest was forced to wait for the official's entourage to pass before he could continue his journey north. Mount Hiei, northeast of the capital, was an important monastic center.

553. Muroto (in Shikoku, now Kōchi Prefecture) was the site of two more temples that the priest wished to visit.

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When the ceremonies were over and everyone had left, Sagoromo stayed behind, quietly asking Asukai's aunt about his daughter and painfully realizing how much he had loved Asukai herself. Off in the distance, a temple bell tolled vespers. In the darkness, the empty house seemed to grow still more desolate, until overwhelmed, he finally raised the shutters and stared off into the night, lost in desperate prayers.

Near dawn, he went out to the veranda and lay down. As he dozed, Asukai appeared beside him, looking just as he had remembered her, and recited a poem:

> From darkness into darkness I wander the mountain of death,
> but now your prayers bring me light.[554]

The years apart had given Sagoromo a fresh appreciation for her beauty, and he tried to speak, only to find himself awake and alone on the veranda, with the moonlight streaming down on his face and the sky stretching off coldly into distant clouds. It was a chilling vista even without such dreams, and Sagoromo could not help glancing uneasily around him, wondering whether Asukai's spirit might not still be there. But there was no one; everyone else was sleeping soundly inside the house.

Staring alone into the sky, Sagoromo wondered whether Asukai was making her sad way over the "mountain of death" even now. She had seemed angry, he thought, and he guiltily recalled how he had joked at their first meeting about the priest's affections and how he had threatened to leave her there in the street. Sick with longing and unable to shake the vision, he composed a silent response to her poem:

> We promised to go together to the mountain of death,
> but does she wait, I wonder, at the crossing?[555]

Fighting back tears, he threw himself into chanting the sutras, intoning them with such passion that he woke everyone in the house.[556]

[Translated by Charo D'Etcheverry]

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554. Asukai alludes to the famous poem by Izumi Shikibu, *Shūishū*, Lament, no. 1342: "From darkness onto a dark path must I go; shine on me brightly, moon on the mountain's crest."

555. Sagoromo refers to Sanzu River, believed to divide this world from that of the dead. Tradition had it that a woman's first lover carried her across to the other shore. It is typical of Sagoromo's ambivalence toward Asukai that while knowing himself to be her only lover, he still wonders whether she will be there waiting for him.

556. The last time that Sagoromo had chanted the sutras so magnificently, Fugen himself appeared. This time, however, neither Fugen nor Asukai heeds his call. The scene echoes Genji's loss of Murasaki in *The Tale of Genji*.

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THE GREAT MIRROR (*ŌKAGAMI*, LATE ELEVENTH CENTURY)

The Great Mirror covers the same period as that of *A Tale of Flowering Fortunes* (*Eiga monogatari*), the period of the Fujiwara regency, in the mid-Heian period, with particular focus on Fujiwara no Michinaga (966–1027), the most powerful regent of the time. Not satisfied with the accomplishments of *A Tale of Flowering Fortunes*, the author of *The Great Mirror* attempted to write a new kind of history, which showed not only Michinaga in his splendor but also how and why he achieved that glory. To do this, the author concentrated on how the Fujiwara, particularly the northern branch, outdid the other clans and secured their position as maternal relatives to the throne, revealing the fierce and often cruel battles for political control.

In contrast to *A Tale of Flowering Fortunes*, which provides a chronological, year-by-year historical record, *The Great Mirror* follows the format of Sima Qian's *Records of the Historian* (*Shi ji*) by adapting a biographical approach, thereby creating a new type of historical narrative. Most editions of *The Great Mirror* consist of five parts: a preface, a record of emperors, biographies of ministers, tales of the Fujiwara, and stories of the distant past. It begins in 850 with the reign of Emperor Montoku (r. 850–858), when the Fujiwara regency was first established, and ends in 1025, in the reign of Emperor Go-Ichijō, two years before Michinaga's death. In all, it covers fourteen imperial reigns and 176 years. The record of emperors occupies only one-tenth of *The Great Mirror*. The largest part is made up of twenty biographies of Fujiwara ministers, beginning with Fujiwara no Fuyutsugu (775–826) and ending with Michinaga. Although he was regent only briefly (1015–1017), Michinaga dominated the court from the time of the death of his second brother, Michitaka, in 995 until his own death in 1027. To link the records of the emperors with the biographies of the ministers, the author describes the Fujiwara daughters who became members of the royal family.

The Great Mirror's other innovative approach is to present history by means of dramatic dialogue, which stresses the authenticity of the histories. In the preface, the 190-year-old man Ōyake no Yotsugi meets the 180-year-old man Natsuyama no Shigeki at Urin-in, a Tendai temple in northern Kyoto, where they discuss the past. Yotsugi, who speaks as someone who has lived through many of these events, becomes the primary raconteur, with Shigeki and a young samurai occasionally adding comments. In contrast to *A Tale of Flowering Fortunes*, which does not have a fully personified narrator, these raconteurs extensively comment on and evaluate the events and figures in *The Great Mirror*, particularly those related to the Fujiwara ministers. The dramatic narration also has a strong parallel to *setsuwa* (anecdotal) literature, a genre that was popular at this time, with the anecdotes presented as records of what people actually experienced. Throughout *The Great Mirror*, the author attempts to look at history from the perspective of the individual and, accordingly, includes interesting episodes and anecdotes.

The Great Mirror (*Ōkagami*) is the title given to this text in the late Heian period. Before that, it appears to have had different names, such as *The Book of Yotsugi's Mirror* (*Yotsugi no kagami no maki*). In China, history was regarded metaphorically as a mirror

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or reflector of past events. The storytellers who recount the events in *Ōkagami*, however, claim that history as a mirror describes not only the past but also the present and even the future. *The Great Mirror* is thought to have been written at the end of the eleventh century, about seventy or eighty years after *The Tale of Genji*, although some scholars date it later, in the early twelfth century, particularly since *The Great Mirror* draws on the *Collection of Tales of Times Now Past* (*Konjaku monogatari shū*, ca. 1120). The author is unknown. Late Heian aristocratic scholars such as Ōe Masafusa (1041–111) have been proposed, but nothing is certain. Like *The Tales of Ise* and *The Tales of the Heike*, *The Great Mirror* has many variants and grew over time, with new sections added by later writers, making the issue of authorship even more difficult.

Preface

It happened recently that I attended an enlightenment sermon at the Urin'in,[557] where I witnessed an encounter between three people of extraordinary and disturbing antiquity—two graybeards and a crone, who had, it seemed, sat down in the same place by chance. How strange that such a trio should have come together! As I stared, they laughed and exchanged glances.

"For years now, I have been wanting to meet someone from the old days with whom to discuss what has been going on in the world, and especially to talk about the fortunes of our present Novice Excellency,"[558] one of the old men said. "This happy meeting reconciles me to the thought of dying. A person feels stuffed when he can't get things off his chest. No wonder the man of old dug a hole and talked into it when he had a piece of news to pass along. It's delightful to see you. Tell me, what is your age?"

"I don't know," said the other, "but I am the Ōinumaro who acted as page to the late chancellor, Lord Tadahira, when he was a Chamberlain Lesser Captain.[559] You are the famous Ōyake no Yotsugi who served the Empress Mother in that reign, aren't you? You must be much older than I am. You were a man of twenty-five or twenty-six when I was only a boy."

"Yes, yes," Yotsugi agreed. "That's right. What is your name?"

"Lord Tadahira asked about my surname when I went through the capping ceremony[560] at his mansion. I answered, 'Natsuyama,' and he named me Shigeki on the spot."

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557. Enlightenment sermons (*bōdaikō*), delivered by a Buddhist preacher who used the Lotus Sutra as a text, were designed to ensure rebirth in Amida Buddha's Pure Land. The ones at the Urin'in took place annually in the Fifth Month.

558. Fujiwara no Michinaga, probably so called to distinguish him from his father, Kaneie. Novice (*nyūdō*) was a courtesy title for an official of the third or higher rank who had taken the tonsure; Excellency (*denka*) was a term of respect applied to princes and regents.

559. Conjectured to have been around 895.

560. *Genpuku*, a ritual in which a boy formally became an adult. The central act was the ceremonious placing of a man's cap on his head.

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It was an astonishing dialogue. All the intelligent members of the congregation were watching from their seats or edging closer. A man of about thirty made his way to a nearby spot—an attendant from a noble household, by the look of him. "Really, now, you old people are saying some interesting things, but who is going to believe you?" he asked.

The two men looked at one another, laughing scornfully.

"You say you don't remember how old you are," said the attendant, fixing his eyes on the one who called himself Shigeki. "I wonder if this old gentleman might know?"

"Of course," said Yotsugi. "I turned 190 this year, which makes Shigeki 180; it's just that he is too modest to say so. I was born on the fifteenth of the First Month in the year of Emperor Seiwa's abdication [876], so I have seen the reigns of thirteen sovereigns. That's not a bad age, is it? People may not think I am telling the truth, but I had a father who served a young university student, and it was a case of 'humble but near the capital.'[561] He learned to read and write, and he recorded my birth date on a set of swaddling clothes, which has survived to this day. It was the *hinoe saru* year."[562] He made it all sound perfectly natural.

The attendant turned to the other old man.

"I should still like to ask your age," he said. "Do you know your birth year? If so, we can easily calculate it."

"I was not reared by my own parents," Shigeki said. "Somebody else took care of me until I was twelve or thirteen. My foster father never mentioned my exact age. He just said, 'I didn't have a family, but once I happened to take along ten strings of my own money when my master sent me to market. I met a woman carrying a pretty baby, and she said to me, "I'm looking for someone to take this child. He is my tenth. His father was forty when he was born, and furthermore he even arrived in the Fifth Month.[563] I want to get rid of him." I traded my coins for him and took him home. When I asked about the family's name, the mother said it was Natsuyama.' I entered Lord Tadahira's service when I was thirteen."

"Well, well, I can't tell you how glad I am to meet you," said Yotsugi. "A buddha must have answered my prayers. Nowadays we are always hearing about sermons in some place or other, but I usually don't bother to go. It's a good thing I decided to attend this one. Is the lady someone you married in the old days?"

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561. Presumably a proverb to the effect that even humble folk pick up city ways and city accomplishments—in this case, literacy—when exposed to life in the capital.

562. Like others of the ten stems and twelve branches, *hinoe* and *saru* occur in combination at sixty-year intervals; 876 was in fact a *hinoe saru* year.

563. It was believed that a child born when his father was forty would murder his father when he grew up and that one born in the Fifth Month would harm his parents.

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"No," Shigeki answered. "My first wife died young; I married this one afterward. How about you?"

"My first wife and I are still living together. She got ready to come with me today, but she suffers from malaria, and it turned out to be one of her bad days, so she had to give it up." They seemed to be weeping, but their eyes were dry.[564]

Time passed while we waited for the preacher. We were all feeling bored when old Yotsugi spoke up again. "Well, since there's nothing else to do, what do you say? Shall I give you a story about the old days to let these people know what things were like?"

"By all means! That would be splendid," said Shigeki. "Do talk to us. I'll speak up once in a while if I have anything to add."

It looked as though they were eager to talk, and I for one longed to hear them. Many others in the crowd were probably determined to catch every word too, but I was struck most of all by the attitude of the attendant, who seemed bent on taking part in the conversation.

"The world is a fascinating place," said Yotsugi. "Yet it is only the old who have learned to understand it a little. In ancient times, wise sovereigns sought out the oldest men and women in the country, asked them how various kinds of laws had worked in the past, and governed accordingly. The aged deserve your respect; don't look down on them, young people!" I watched in amusement as he gave a complacent cackle and hid his face behind his fan, which was made of yellow paper with nine black persimmon-wood ribs.

"I have only one thing of importance on my mind," he went on, "and that is to describe Lord Michinaga's unprecedented successes to all of you here, clergy and laity of both sexes. It is a complicated subject, so I shall have to discuss a fair number of emperors, empresses, ministers of state, and senior nobles first. Then when I reach Michinaga himself, the most fortunate of all, you will understand just how everything came about. They tell us that the Buddha began by expounding other sutras when he wanted to explain the Lotus, which is why his sermons are called the teachings of the five periods.[565] That is how it is with me, too; I need to 'expound other sutras' in order to describe Michinaga's successes."

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564. It is not uncommon for old people to lose their ability to shed tears.

565. In the Lotus Sutra, Shakyamuni explains that buddhahood is the only goal of Buddhism, and that his earlier preaching of other goals has been designed to encourage the weak and prepare them for the truth. The basic point is illustrated with a wealth of parables, and merit is repeatedly promised to all who revere and propagate the sutra. According to Tendai doctrine, the Buddha's fifty-year teaching career was divided into five periods: (1) three seven-day periods, immediately following his enlightenment, during which he preached the contents of the Avatamsaka Sutra; (2) twelve years of preaching Hinayana scriptures in the Deer Park; (3) eight years of preaching a combination of Mahayana and Hinayana doctrines (the *vaipulya* period); (4) twenty-two years of preaching the *prajna* (wisdom) sutras; and (5) eight years of preaching the Lotus Sutra and, in a day and a night, the Nirvana Sutra.

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In spite of this rather theatrical and pretentious prelude, I wondered whether he would have anything worthwhile to say, but he continued in a most impressive vein.

"I suppose you youngsters nowadays think every regent, minister of state, and senior noble in history has been very much like Michinaga. That is far from true. Of course, they have all been descendants of the same ancestor and members of the same family,[566] but the family has produced many different kinds of people in the process of branching out.

"The first Japanese sovereign after the seven divine generations was Emperor Jinmu; and there have been sixty-eight emperors from Emperor Jinmu to our present ruler. I ought to discuss each of them in turn, from Emperor Jinmu on, but that would take us far back into unfamiliar history, so I had better confine myself to the recent past.

"There was an emperor called Montoku. From that emperor to the present, there have been fourteen reigns. To put it in terms of years, 176 have elapsed since the accession of Emperor Montoku in the third year of Kashō [850]. Awesome as it is to speak the names of those august sovereigns. . . ."

And he went on to tell the following story.

The following passage elaborates on the significance of the mirror. The Great Mirror *was the first of a series of "mirror" histories in Japanese.*

"You may wonder why I have talked about all these reigns," Yotsugi said, "but how can I explain Michinaga's success without discussing the emperors and empresses who made it possible? A garden tree won't grow and bear fruit unless we feed its roots and take good care of it. That is why I have thought to give you a history of the throne before discussing ministers of state."

"You mustn't apologize," Shigeki interrupted enthusiastically. "It has been splendid! Your descriptions of all the emperors have been just like reflections in a mirror. Now that you are going to tell us about the ministers, too, I feel like a man witnessing a glorious sunrise after years in the dark. My wife's mirror at home is terribly cloudy, and we never get around to polishing it, so she keeps it in her comb box, and we have learned to manage with nothing better. When I listen to you, I feel as I do when I catch a glimpse of my face in a bright, shiny mirror—it's embarrassing to see what I really look like, but the reflection is amazingly true to life. This is a wonderful experience for me! It's bound to add ten or twenty years to my life."

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566. Members of other families actually received 42 of the 105 ministerial appointments made between 645 and 1025. From 899 on, however, the only non-Fujiwara ministers were Minamoto, who were closely related to the imperial house. By about the same time, every senior noble (*kugyō*, a term used for consultants and holders of the three highest court ranks) was either a Fujiwara or a Minamoto.

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Shigeki's raptures struck the rest of us as comical, but Yotsugi's extraordinary narrative was hard to dismiss, and everyone continued to pay close attention.

"Listen to this," Shigeki said. "I've thought up a poem."

"Excellent! Let us hear it," Yotsugi said. Shigeki recited bashfully:

> Now that I have chanced upon this clear mirror,
> I can see the past, the present, and what is to come.

Much impressed, Yotsugi mumbled phrases under his breath and came out with a reply.

> The old mirror! Without concealment,
> it reveals afresh the deeds of sovereigns, each in his turn.

"Do you feel as though you were facing a stylish flower-shaped mirror in an inlaid lacquer box?" he asked. "No, such trinkets make a fine glitter, but they tarnish before you know it. I am a plain old-fashioned mirror from a bygone age, made of good white metal that stays clear without being polished." It would have been amusing to capture his complacent smile in a painting. His self-praise put one off a bit, but there was no denying the interest and novelty of his story.

"Enough of trivialities," he said. "I am going to discuss serious matters now. Pay close attention, everyone. Just as you must look on today's presentation of holy writ as an aid to enlightenment, so you should think, as you listen to me, that you are hearing the *Chronicles of Japan*."[567]

"We have heard plenty of sutra expositions and sermons, but nobody has ever told us such marvelous things," said the monks and laymen. Ancient nuns and monks touched their hands to their foreheads and sat listening with pious fervor.

"I am a remarkable old fellow. Wouldn't any honest soul feel embarrassed by comparison? I am an old man who has kept his eyes open and remembered every single thing. But of all the things I have seen and heard, Lord Michinaga's situation is what stands out. Whether we inquire about the past or look at the present, Michinaga is just like the dharma of the One Vehicle: there is 'not a second, not a third.'[568] His success is beyond comparison or calculation. What a magnificent career! It is no easy matter to go through life without problems, even for a chancellor or a regent. The holy writings and sacred teachings say, 'There are many baby fish, but it is hard for them to reach maturity; there are

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567. *Nihon shoki*. The first of the *Rikkokushi* (six official Chinese-language chronicles), but here probably a general reference to all six.

568. "One Vehicle" is a term used in the Lotus Sutra to identify the teachings that lead to enlightenment: "There is no other vehicle, not a second, not a third."

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trees called mangoes, but it is hard for them to bear ripe fruit.'[569] That is exactly how it is with this matchless lord; he is unique among the ministers of state and senior nobles of the nation. Who can hope to equal his good fortune in the future? It is not something that happens very often.

"Listen quietly, everyone. There is nothing I have not seen or heard. I think the things I am going to tell you will be new to many people."

All who were present paid close attention. "It is not for us to say anything at all," they all agreed.

[Translated by Helen McCullough]

THE MIRROR OF THE PRESENT (*IMAKAGAMI*, CA. 1170)

By the latter part of the twelfth century, *The Tale of Genji* had become the object of serious scholarship and commentary, particularly for those interested in Japanese poetry. But it stood in an uncertain position as a monogatari or work of fiction, which had long held a low position in the hierarchy of genres. "The Progress of Fiction" is the final chapter of the historical tale *The Mirror of the Present* and is cast in the form common to all works of the "mirror" series: an aged person, encouraged by an audience of inquisitive pilgrims, gives a rambling, firsthand account of times long past. The narrator of *The Mirror of the Present* is a toothless and doddering woman more than 150 years old, who as a young girl had served as a lady-in-waiting to Murasaki Shikibu. While gathering fern shoots near her home, she encounters a band of pilgrims returning from the temple at Hatsuse, who, upon learning her age and identity, begin to ask her questions. Toward the end of the day, one of the pilgrims laments the severity of Murasaki Shikibu's punishment for having written her "insinuating and suggestive" monogatari, and the work closes with the old woman's attempt to defend the writings of her former mistress. The ensuing conversation is an excellent epitome of the arguments for and against fiction that were rehearsed in a multitude of treatises on *The Tale of Genji* throughout the medieval period.

A strict interpretation of Buddhist moral precepts led to the conclusion that fictions of any sort were a form of "falsehood" (*mōgo*) and that writing of highly literary or poetic quality was a breach of the commandment against "specious, ornamented language" (*kigo*). As a tale of "amorous intrigues," *The Tale of Genji* was further censured for corrupting morals and exciting the passions. The cumulative force of these several strictures can be gauged by the widespread credence given the legend mentioned by the first pilgrim, that Murasaki Shikibu had been cast into hell for having written *Genji* and that her readers stood in danger of like retribution.

Defenders of *The Tale of Genji* argued not against the basic validity of these charges but for a more subtle interpretation of the precepts on which they were based. One

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569. Said by *Ōkagami uragaki* to be a quotation from the Nirvana Sutra. It is not found in extant versions of the sutra, but it does appear, in slightly different form, in the *Ōjōyōshū* and other Buddhist texts.

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line of reasoning held that *Genji*, though not "true" in the literal sense, was a moral fable and therefore a form of "expedient truth" (*hōben*), such as the Buddha had used in preaching to those incapable of grasping more sublime expressions of the Buddhist way. The immoral acts depicted in the novel could thus be seen as serving the same purpose as those related by the Buddha in his parables: to illustrate graphically the true nature and consequences of wrongdoing in order to inculcate in the reader an abhorrence of evil. A strong buttress to this argument was the popular belief in bodhisattvas who appeared in human form in order to "lead men to enlightenment." The narrator of *The Mirror of the Present* is one of many to suggest that Murasaki Shikibu was not an ordinary person but an incarnation of the bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara (J. Kannon).

Another line of argument used in "The Progress of Fiction" was based on the doctrine of the "Middle Way" expounded by the Indian sage Nagarjuna (ca. 150–250). In its original form this was a complex metaphysical postulate that held, among other things, that all sensory perceptions are illusory, hence all distinctions between true and false, right and wrong, good and evil, and so on, are meaningless. Seeming differences are only seeming; all partake ultimately of a single Absolute. In Japan, however, the doctrine was often interpreted in ways more utilitarian than metaphysical. Objections to literature could thus be confuted by citing, as the old woman does, the passage from the Nirvana Sutra that says "even coarse and insinuating language partakes of Absolute Truth," or the prayer by the Chinese poet Bo Juyi (772–846) that the "wild words and decorative phrases" (*kyōgen kigo*) of his poetry might "lead the way to enlightenment."

The Progress of Fiction

Yet another of the pilgrims said, "How true it is I do not know, but so often we hear that Murasaki Shikibu, for crafting so insinuating and suggestive a tissue of lies in her *Tale of Genji*, was in the afterlife doomed to be consumed in smoke, like seaweed in the salt fires. This so upsets me that, vain though it may be to hope for her deliverance, I should like to pray for the repose of her soul."

"Yes," the old woman replied, "that is indeed what everyone says. And yet, in Japan as in China, the writings of the wise have always brought comfort to men's hearts, and have illumined the way for dimmer minds; and this hardly deserves the name of falsehood [*mōgo*]. To describe what never did happen, protesting behind a face of innocence that it is actually true; to lead others to think well of evil—to utter any sort of lie [*soragoto*] is sinful indeed. But is *The Tale of Genji* really such an empty fabrication? Meretricious or specious you might call it; but these hardly seem the most monstrous of sins. To take the life of any living creature, or to steal even the least of a man's treasures—these are horrible sins for which the offender may be plunged to the very depths of hell. But I find it hard to imagine that such should be the lot of Murasaki Shikibu, though to be sure I have no knowledge of what retribution she might now be

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suffering. To stir men's hearts can, after all, be productive of virtue. And though to excite the passions may perhaps prevent one's release from the cycle of rebirth, this is hardly so serious a transgression as to send one to hell. It is difficult enough to comprehend the affairs of our own time; but in China the poet Bo Juyi composed a work in seventy volumes which greatly stirred men's hearts, with its elegant phrases and ingenious conceits—and this man, we are told, is the incarnation of Manjusri.[570] Indeed, the Buddha himself, when he preached in parables, invented stories of events that never occurred; and these certainly are not to be regarded falsehoods. For a mere woman to have written such a marvelous book as this, well, it does not seem to me she could have been any ordinary person. More than likely, she was Gadgadśvara or Avalokiteśvara or some other supernatural being, come to us in the form of a woman to preach the Doctrine and lead men to enlightenment."

A child in the company then said: "I can see how some women who have led others to enlightenment might indeed have been Avalokiteśvara incarnate—such as Queen Vimaladatta, who led the King before the Buddha and persuaded him to reform his wicked ways;[571] or Queen Shrimala, whose praise of the Buddha, inspired by her parents' epistles, will transmit the Doctrine to generations yet unborn.[572] But *The Tale of Genji* is such an assemblage of amorous intrigues, all set forth as the very truth, that it corrupts people's minds and excites their passion. How are we to regard this as the sacred and holy Doctrine?"

"Yes," the old woman said, "there is some truth in what you say. Yet when you consider what an extraordinary and marvelous work the *Genji* is; that she has written not just a scroll or two, but a book of sixty chapters;[573] that nowhere is it flawed by frivolity; that in the past as in the present it has brought pleasure even to emperors and empresses, who have made magnificent copies of it, and have prized it above all their treasures—when you consider all these things, I say, what in fact strikes one as odd is that anyone could consider its author sinful. By showing the deeply sinful, it inspires one to chant the holy name of the Buddha, and thus can serve as a first step toward the enlightenment of those for whose deliverance we pray; by revealing to us the workings of a feeling heart, it wins over to the path of righteousness those mired in the miseries of this

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570. *Bo Juyi's Collected Works.* Mañjuśrī (J. Monju) is the bodhisattva of wisdom.

571. Vimaladatta's (J. Jōtoku) conversion of her husband, with the help of an impressive magic display by her two sons, is the subject of the twenty-seventh chapter of the Lotus Sutra.

572. Alex Wayman and Hideko Wayman, trans., *The Lion's Roar of Queen Shrimala* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1974).

573. *The Tale of Genji* actually contains only fifty-four chapters. Medieval commentators, however, often ascribed sixty chapters, suggesting that this number had been selected by the author to correspond to the sixty chapters of the principal scriptures of the Tendai school of Buddhism.

Telif hakkı olan materyal

world; in demonstrating the evanescence of this world, it is by no means without effect as an exhortation to the Way of the Buddha. When you further consider that it depicts one who, though grieved at having to leave behind his loved ones, yet keeps the precepts of the Lay Disciple,[574] and a woman who guards her chastity until death in obedience to her father's dying injunctions,[575] it is plain to see that the tale was intended as an object lesson. When readers see how Genji, who enjoyed the boundless favor of the emperor, and was blessed with the best of all possible karmas, yet dies as though all this had been but a dream or an illusion, they cannot but realize how ephemeral are the things of this world. And then there is the emperor who relinquishes his throne to his younger brother and retires to a hermitage in the western hills[576]—here is another example of one that calls to mind that emperor of old in the Doctrine—one indeed that calls to mind that emperor of old in the Devadatta Chapter of the Lotus Sutra.[577] Vasubandhu has written at the beginning of his treatise[578] that naught but the wisdom to distinguish right from wrong can rescue the heart lost in darkness; for so deep are the depths of delusion that the ignorant only drift on as though upon a bottomless sea. And so the Buddha in his benevolence has given us this means to discern the true nature of things and turn us in the way of enlightenment, this seed of the propagation of his Doctrine—that even coarse and insinuating language can lead the way to the Truth of the Absolute. To be sure, *The Tale of Genji* is not the untainted holy word of the Doctrine. Yet under the pure morning light of the Doctrine, surely anyone possessed of such great compassion as to pray for the deliverance of Murasaki Shikibu—whether because he found comfort in her book or was deeply touched by it—surely such a person must form a very deep bond of good karma."

As she spoke, the pilgrims, in their eagerness to hear more, lost all thought of their destination. Yet loath though they were to part from her, the sun had begun to set, and they went their separate ways.

"Perhaps one day we shall all meet again," she said, "for I hope in some future life to become a buddha and preach the Doctrine as I have done here today under the Tree of Enlightenment."

These words convinced the pilgrims she could be no ordinary mortal. But when they later sought her at the place where she had said she lived, she was

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574. Hachinomiya, the Eighth Prince.

575. Ōigimi, the Eighth Prince's daughter.

576. The Suzaku emperor.

577. The twelfth chapter of the Lotus Sutra, in which the Buddha relates how he himself forsook his throne to seek enlightenment.

578. Probably referring to Vasubandhu's *Trsimika vijnapti-karika* (J. *Yuishiki sanjū ronju*, Daizōkyō 1586).

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not to be found. Filled with regret that they had not sent one of their number to follow her, they proceeded on their way.

[Introduction and translation by Thomas J. Harper]

COLLECTION OF TALES OF TIMES NOW PAST
(*KONJAKU MONOGATARI SHŪ*, CA. 1120)

The *Collection of Tales of Times Now Past*, a monolithic collection of 1039 setsuwa, or anecdotes, was compiled in the late Heian period, in the early twelfth century. Of the thirty-one volumes, three (8, 18, 21) are missing. The collection is divided into three parts: the first five volumes are on India (Tenjiku); the next five volumes, on China (Shintan); and the remaining twenty-one volumes, on Japan (Honchō).

It is not clear whether the compiler was a Buddhist monk or an aristocrat, a single author or a group of writers. Traditionally, the compiler has been thought to be Minamoto no Takakuni (1004–1077), but the inclusion of stories dated after Takakuni died makes this improbable.

The anthology is the first world history of Buddhism to be written in Japanese; two-thirds of the anecdotes are Buddhist stories and the rest, secular stories. Volumes 1 through 4 describe the history of Buddhism in India, from the birth of Shakyamuni to the spread of Buddhism after Shakyamuni's death. Volumes 6 through 9 (with 8 missing) describe the transmission of Buddhism from India to China and relate various stories of miracles and karmic causality. Volumes 11 through 20 (with 18 missing) outline the history of Buddhism in Japan, beginning with the transmission of Buddhism from China.

The remaining volumes (5, 10, 21–32) depict secular life in India, China, and Japan. Volumes 5 and 10, which open the India and China sections, respectively, begin with stories about the emperor and the imperial court, followed by stories of ministers and then of warriors. Volume 21, the first of the secular-Japan section, is missing, but volume 22 provides biographies of powerful Fujiwara ministers; volume 23 depicts stories of military leaders; and volume 24 offers stories of doctors, diviners, and artists. The secular parts, in other words, are constructed with the imperial court and the emperor as the source of authority and the main sociopolitical axis. The secular volumes also reach beyond court society to include the samurai (vol. 25), who, though subservient to the nobility, rebel and commit violent acts. Volume 29, which focuses on those who commit evil acts (*akugyō*), takes this external perspective even further. Volumes 26 through 31 center on the themes of karmic retribution and reward, demons and spirits, humor, and love, depicting a diverse social world that contrasts with the aristocratic world of Heian monogatari and literary diaries.

The setsuwa in the *Konjaku monogatari shū* have two large purposes: religious (in leading the audience to a deeper understanding of Buddhism) and secular (for entertainment and practical purposes). In its religious aims, the *Konjaku monogatari shū*

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tries to appeal to commoners and the masses by presenting Buddhism in a simplified form. The rewards for faith are immediate, and the punishment for sin is direct and immediate. Stories about the Lotus Sutra, for example, make no or little attempt to explain the content of the sutra; instead, they focus on the efficacy and merit acquired by reciting the sutra or having faith in it. Indeed, the worldly efficacy—the belief in the power of Buddhism to protect human beings from disasters—is usually stressed. The Buddhist stories were probably compiled by Buddhist preachers as a means of instruction for illiterate audiences. These are not sermons but stories that could be used in sermons. The moral at the end usually applies to only part of the story, reflecting the multiple functions of these narratives. (Indeed, the same story often appears elsewhere in another setsuwa collection for a completely different purpose.)

The focus of the Buddhist stories generally is on the strange and the miraculous rather than on doctrinal matters. The same interest in the strange and mysterious marks the secular chapters, particularly volume 16 (karmic retribution/reward), volume 27 (demons and spirits), volume 28 (humor), volume 29 (evil and criminals), volume 30 (love stories), and volume 31 (stories of the strange). The setting of the setsuwa ranges from the ninth to the twelfth century, encompassing the same historical period in which the monogatari flourished but with a much broader social and environmental range.

The *Collection of Tales of Times Now Past* is written in a mixed Chinese–Japanese style (*wakan konkō bun*), which simultaneously reflects both the Chinese style of the sources and a strong movement toward vernacular Japanese. The stories are presented not as words directly spoken by the narrator or editor but as transmissions of stories that have been heard and recorded.

Tales from India

Volume 5 contains stories about the birth of Shakyamuni, the historical Buddha, as well as many stories that took place before Shakyamuni achieved enlightenment. The story of Ikkaku sennin (One-Horned Immortal) had considerable impact on Japan and also appears in the *Taiheiki* (vol. 37) and in numerous setsuwa collections. The story became a nō play under the same name and in the mid-eighteenth century provided inspiration for the famous kabuki play *Narukami*.

HOW THE ONE-HORNED IMMORTAL CARRIED A WOMAN FROM THE MOUNTAINS TO THE PALACE (5:4)

This story is derived from an early-fifth-century Chinese translation from Sanskrit known as *Dazhidu lun* (J. *Daichido-ron*).

The time is now long past when a certain immortal lived in the mountains of India.[579] He was called the One-Horned Immortal. A single horn protruded

579. According to the Chinese *Fayuan zhulin*, a certain mountain immortal was going to the

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from his forehead. People called him the One-Horned Immortal because of the horn, you see. He had passed years and years in the depths of the mountains, devoting himself to various ascetic practices. He would hop on clouds and soar through the sky, and he moved giant mountains, and he caused the birds and beasts to do his bidding.

Then one day a great rain gushed from the sky and all the mountain paths were utterly ruined. Now as it happened, for reasons somewhat difficult to fathom—yes indeed, you really have to wonder what he was thinking!—the One-Horned Immortal was sauntering about on foot that day, not flying, and the slope was so steep that his feet slipped out from under him, and he fell. To think of an old immortal tumbling down a mountain like this! It made him furious. Then something occurred to him. It's because of all this rain! When rain falls, the paths get all messy—that's how it is in this world. How disgusting it feels having these drenched robes against my skin. And of course those dragon kings are responsible—they're the ones who make the rain fall! It was the work of an instant for the One-Horned Immortal to round up the various dragon kings and shut them up in his flask. Now that they were trapped in the flask, the various dragon kings started wailing and sobbed an infinity of tears.

Now since the One-Horned Immortal had taken all these giant dragon kings and stuffed them into such a small container, it had gotten intolerably cramped inside. It was quite impossible to move, and the pain was dreadful. But alas, the holy man had such marvelous powers that they couldn't do a thing against him. So that's how it was. Twelve years passed without so much as a tiny sprinkling of rain. And as a consequence all the land was parched, and everyone in all five of India's regions went about wailing and moaning.[580] The kings of the Sixteen Great Kingdoms[581] performed various rituals of supplication begging for rain, but none of these had any effect at all. None of the kings had any idea why things were like this.

And then a certain soothsayer spoke. Travel from here in the direction of the Cow and the Tiger and you will come to a forbiddingly large mountain.[582] There is an immortal who lives on this mountain. He has taken the various dragon kings that make the rain fall and bottled them up—that's why no rain falls anywhere in the land. Your majesties can order the venerable saints to pray

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bathroom in a bucket when he caught sight of two deer copulating and instantly became highly aroused. Afterward, the female deer came along and lapped up some of the mixture of urine and sperm, presumably mistaking it for water. She became pregnant. She gave birth to a human baby rather than a deer, a human with one horn: the One-Horned Immortal of this tale.

580. The five regions are the north, the south, the east, the west, and the center.

581. The sixteen kingdoms were located in the northwest of what is now India, centered on the Ganges River.

582. The direction of the cow and the tiger is the northeast. This direction was the so-called demon's gate, from which supernatural forces mounted their attacks. Neither the direction of the cow and the tiger nor the soothsayer is mentioned in the source text.

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all you like, their powers will never be able to compete with those of the other saint. That was what he said.

When the people of the various lands heard this, they let their minds circle the problem, considered it from all angles, wondering what they ought to do, but they were utterly unable to discover a solution. Then a certain minister spoke up. I don't care how venerable a saint this man is, there's no way he could be immune to physical allure or deaf to the charms of a lovely voice. That old mountain immortal people used to talk about way back when, Udraka-Ramaputra—would anyone even think of calling him a fraud?[583] I'd wager he was even greater than this current fellow. And yet Udraka-Ramaputra sank himself in the pleasures of the flesh, and no sooner had he done so than he lost his marvelous powers. So here's what I think we ought to do. We'll command all the elegant beauties with lovely voices to assemble here, and then we'll send them off to that mountain, and whenever they come to a particularly high peak or an especially deep valley—to places, I mean to say, where it seems a mountain immortal would make his abode or where a saint would live—when they find such a place they'll perform a heartrending, scintillating rendition of some song. Hearing that, even this exalted saint of ours is bound to melt. As soon as the minister had finished speaking, it was decided. See that it is done right away, said the king. And so they selected the most elegant and beautiful women with the loveliest voices, five hundred in all, and decked them out in the most exquisite clothing, covered them in sandalwood oil, sprinkled them with aloe, loaded them all into five hundred exquisitely decorated carriages, and sent them on their way.

The sight of all these women getting down out of their carriages way up there in the mountains and then gathering together in a crowd was so splendid there is simply no way to describe it. They wandered off this way and that way in groups of ten or twenty and went to stand in front of caves and under trees and between the peaks of mountains and in all sorts of places, and in these places they sang their heartrending songs. The mountains echoed and the valleys reverberated, and it was so wonderful you almost expected heavenly beings and dragon gods to come look and listen.

While all this was going on, a saint dressed in rustic robes stood by a cave so deep you could barely see into it. He was haggard and emaciated, totally without flesh. Nothing but skin and bones, that's all there was to him, so that looking at him you wondered where his soul could possibly be hiding. A single horn protruded from his forehead. His appearance was infinitely frightening. He hobbled out like a shadow hunched over his stick, a flask in his hand and a misshapen grin on his face.

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583. Udraka-Ramaputra was so famous that he was sought out by Shakyamuni himself, but he lost his powers when he went to court and touched the hand of the king's favorite wife.

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Here's what the immortal said. Who are you, you who come here and sing such amazing songs? I've been living here on this same mountain for a thousand years, but never in my life have I heard anything like this. Are you beings descended from heaven? Or demons from below?

A woman replied. We are neither beings from heaven nor demons from below, but five hundred *kekara*-women—that's what we're called—who spend all our time traveling across India in a big group like this.[584] We'd heard that these mountains are magnificent beyond compare, that all sorts of flowers bloom here, that the streams are thrilling to behold, and that in the midst of all this there lives a most venerable saint. So we thought to ourselves, why don't we go sing our songs for this sainted man? Living up there in the depths of those mountains, he's unlikely ever to have heard anything similar. If we do this, we'll be able to forge a connection with him that may prove helpful in the future.[585] So you see, that's why we've come.

Then the woman sang a song, and the holy man listened, and since her form was truly unlike anything he had ever seen, either in the distant past or in more recent times, and since she sang with such heartrending grace it would be futile to try and describe it, he felt as if his eyes were swimming in light, and his heart was profoundly moved, and his spirit didn't know which way to turn.

The holy man spoke. Listen, will you please do what I say? The woman decided that he seemed to have softened, and made up her mind to ruin him with her cunning. Oh, yes, whatever you say! How could I possibly refuse? she said. Well then, said the holy man, I think perhaps I'll just touch you a little here and there, if that's all right with you. And with that he started galumphing awkwardly toward her, his motions terribly stiff and utterly inappropriate, so that the woman found herself struggling not to make this terrifying creature lose his temper, even as she shuddered at the horn on his head. But since this was precisely what the king of the land had told them to do when he sent them off, she finally fought down her fear and managed to do the things the holy man told her to.

And when that moment came, the various dragon kings were filled with joy, and they smashed their way out of the flask and ascended to the heavens. And no sooner had they done so than a layer of cloud swelled to fill the entire vast expanse of the sky, and bolts of lightning rained down amid crashes of thunder, and a tremendous deluge began. There was nowhere for the woman to hide herself, but then she had no means of getting back home either, and so despite her fear she remained with the holy man for a few days. During this time, his heart became deeply steeped in thoughts of the woman. Then on the fifth day

584. "Kekara" seems to be a corruption of Gandhara, which was a region of modern Pakistan.
585. Their meeting with the immortal might encourage them to become Buddhist nuns.

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the rain let up a little and the sky cleared, and the woman informed the holy man that she was leaving. Things can't go on like this, she said. I'm going to leave. The holy man was very sad that they would have to part. Well, he said, with a pained look on his face, if you must go you must go. The woman replied, I've never been out like this before and walking around on these rocks has caused my feet to swell up terribly. What's more, I don't know the way back. If that's the case, said the holy man, allow me to serve as your guide on the paths that cross the mountains. He started walking on ahead, and the woman gazed at him and saw how white his hair was, like a cap of snow on his head. His face was wrinkled like the surface of the sea, and a single horn protruded from his forehead. His back was so crooked he was folded in two, and he wore the most rustic of clothing. As she watched him hobble along, swaying from side to side as he leaned on his holy man's stick, she found him both ridiculous and, at the same time, terrifying.

They continued walking. And then they arrived at a path that led from one side of a certain valley to another, tracing the edge of a cliff so steep it was entirely beyond description. It was as if someone had set up an enormous folding screen. A giant waterfall plunged from the precipitous heights of the rock face, and way down at the bottom there was a pool of water. The white waves of water seemed to stream up from the bottom, falling backward, and when you tried to peer across to the other side your gaze got lost in a thick tide of fog and mist. There was really no way the woman would be able to get across this, not unless she grew wings or flew across on a dragon's back. And so when they arrived at this point, the woman called to the holy man. I'm not going to be able to make it. I get dizzy just looking—I can't even think. How on earth am I supposed to walk out there? Whereas you—you come here all the time, you're used to it. Please, oh please, you must carry me across! Since the holy man was so infatuated with her, he found it hard to say no to anything she suggested. Yes, that's all quite true, he replied. Let me carry you across.

The holy man's legs were so frail it looked like they would snap if you pinched them, and the fear that he might drop her left her even more terrified than she had been when she imagined crossing on her own, but still she let herself be carried. And though they made it across, the woman told him to keep carrying her a little farther, just a bit farther. In fact she ended up getting carried all the way to the palace.

People on the streets and everyone else who caught a glimpse of them started spreading the word that the One-Horned Immortal who lived in the mountains was heading for the palace with a kekara-woman on his back, and so people of all stations, high and low, both women and men, came from every corner of the vast land of India to see the sight. There the man was, a single horn protruding from his forehead, his hair so white it looked like a cap of snow on his head, his legs as skinny as pins. He held his walking stick under the woman's bottom, using it to wiggle her up again whenever she started to slip. Not one

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of the people who saw the sight refrained from laughing and jeering at the One-Horned Immortal.

When they had arrived at the palace, the king treated the One-Horned Immortal with great respect and even awe, since—though the old man looked like an ass—the king had heard he was a venerable saint. Feel free to return to your mountain right away, commanded the king, and though the holy man had felt as if he were walking on clouds all the way to the palace, he went back tottering and stumbling.

People say there really was a holy man as ridiculous as that.

[Translated by Michael Emmerich]

HOW THE LION SHOWED COMPASSION FOR A MONKEY'S CHILDREN AND TORE OUT HIS OWN FLESH FOR AN EAGLE (5:14)

This story is derived from an early-fifth-century Chinese translation from Sanskrit known as *Dazhidu lun* (J. *Daichido-ron*). The opening lines of this tale, and the outline of the story as a whole, show the influence of a similar tale found in the Buddhist text *Da jijing*.

The time is now long past when a lion lived in a cave deep in the mountains of India. It seemed to this lion that since he was king of all the animals, he really ought to look on them with compassion and try to protect them. That was how he saw things.

Now in these same mountains there were two monkeys. One was the wife and one was the husband. The wife had given birth to two babies, which they were now in the process of raising. The babies kept getting bigger and bigger, and while when they were still little it had been possible for the mother to hug one to her stomach and put the other up on her back and carry the two of them around with her when she went out to roam the mountains and the plains, hunting for the fruits and berries she needed to keep them fed, this wasn't possible anymore. The babies had grown too big for her to hug one to her stomach and put one up onto her back the way she had in the old days. The problem was that there was no way she could keep her babies fed if she gave up roaming the mountains and plains, hunting for fruits and berries. It wasn't only the children, either—she and her husband would have trouble getting by if she couldn't go out for food. On the other hand, if she left the children at home and went out alone, those birds that flew through the sky would come and grab the children in their beaks and fly off with them, and those animals that ran around on the ground would come and seize the children and run off with them. Paralyzed by her fears, unable to find a solution, she stopped going out altogether. Both parents grew terribly weak, and it began to look as if they would starve.

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They kept turning the problem over in their minds, trying to come up with a plan, and then one day the mother had an idea. There's a lion living in one of those caves on the mountain, she thought. Why don't I ask the lion to guard the kids, and while he's watching them I can go roam the mountains and plains gathering the fruits and berries I need to keep our children and ourselves alive. This was the monkey's idea. So she went to the lion's cave and spoke with him. Great lion, she said, you are king of all the animals. Thus it is only fitting that you should display great compassion in your dealings with us lesser animals. Now while we monkeys are just about as low down on the hierarchy as you can get, we're still animals, and since this is the case it is obvious that you must extend your compassion to us as well. Which brings us to the matter at hand. It just so happens that I have given birth to two babies. When they were small I could put one up on my back and hug the other to my stomach and take them along with me when I made my humble way over the mountains and across the plains hunting for fruits and berries to keep my children and myself alive. But these babies of mine kept getting bigger and bigger, and now they have grown so big that I can't hug and carry them as I once did, and it has become impossible for me to go out and roam the mountains and plains. Things have gone on in this way for so long that my children and I are both teetering on the edge of death. Under the circumstances perhaps I should have made up my mind to go out alone, leaving the children behind, but it scares me to think what the other animals might do. So I haven't gone out at all, and we've grown so weak that now we really are on the brink of death. I'm hoping that you will be so kind as to allow me to leave these children with you while I go out and roam the mountains and plains, hunting for fruits and berries. Oh please, please be so kind as to let me leave them with you! While I'm away, just while I'm away, please, if you could just guard these children for me, keeping them safe and sound!

The lion agreed to do what she said. Yes, he replied, all that you have said is true. Bring your children over here immediately and set them before me. I'll gladly protect them until you return. The monkey was delighted. She went up and left her babies in front of the lion, and then she scampered off, relieved of all her worries, heading for the mountains and the plains to hunt for fruits and berries.

The lion lay with the two little monkeys in front of him, watching them without so much as a glance to the side, and then he dozed off for a little while, and while he was dozing an eagle came and perched himself in the branches of a tree near the cave, keeping itself out of sight. If I can only catch him off guard, even just for a moment, thought the eagle as he sat there, I'll grab those little monkeys and make a break for it. Then he noticed that the lion had fallen asleep. He flapped down and seized the two babies in the talons of his two feet, then flapped back up and perched himself in the same tree again. He was just

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preparing to start his meal when the lion woke up and glanced around and realized that neither of the monkeys was anywhere to be seen. The lion was aghast, he ran around in a frenzy, and then he dashed out of the cave and looked around and saw the eagle perched in the tree directly in front of his cave. He saw that the eagle had the two little monkeys—that he had seized a monkey with the talons of one of his feet and was holding it down with the talons of the other and was on the verge of tucking into his meal.

The lion was thrown into a frenzy when he saw this, he had no idea what to do, and so he went over to the foot of the tree and yelled up at the eagle. You're the king of the birds, I'm the king of the beasts. Both of us ought to have a pretty good sense of how things ought to be. Now, not long ago a monkey residing somewhere near this cave of mine came and had a talk with me. I'd like to go gather fruits and berries so that I can feed these children and keep myself alive, she said, but I'm terribly worried about my children, what might happen to them, and so I was hoping you might be so good as to watch over them while I'm out roving the mountains and plains. That's what she said. And then she went off, leaving her children with me, and then I took a little nap, you see, and you came along and made off with the babies. Please, will you do me a favor and give those little monkeys back to me? The thought of losing them after I promised to guard them pains me so much it's like having my liver and heart torn out at once. And allow me to remind you that you can ill afford to ignore my words. You birds won't be able to maintain your composure for long if I get angry and start roaring and yelling. That's what the lion said to the eagle.

And here's the eagle's reply: What you say is perfectly reasonable. But you see, these two little monkeys were going to be my meal for the day. How will I survive until tomorrow if I return them to you? Besides, the only reason we birds find you so awesome and terrible is that we're eager to preserve our lives. So you see, I have no reason at all to return the monkeys. I'm eating them because I have to, this is what I have to do to keep myself alive. That's what the eagle said.

Then the lion responded: Yes, yes, I can see your point. So how would this be. In exchange for those monkeys, I'll give you a lump of my own flesh. Keep yourself alive until tomorrow by eating my flesh today. And with that the lion slashed at his thigh with his sword-like claws, scooping out a lump of flesh which he then rolled into a ball the same size as the two little monkeys and gave to the eagle. Once more he repeated his request that the eagle give back the monkeys. How could I possibly refuse now? said the eagle. And he handed the monkeys over.

Now covered in blood, the lion picked up the two little monkeys and went back to lie down in his cave. Just then, the mother of the two little monkeys returned with her load of fruits and berries. The lion told her what had hap-

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pened, and she shed so many tears it seemed to be raining. Listen, said the lion, it's wasn't that your words really carried much weight with me—I only did this because I couldn't bear to go back on a promise I had made. And at that same time, it is true that I feel a great deal of compassion for you lesser animals. That was what the lion said.

People say this lion was the buddha we now call Shakyamuni. The male monkey was Kasyapa, the great follower of Buddha. The female monkey was the nun Zengo. The two little monkeys were Ananda and Rahula. And the eagle was .[586]

[Translated by Michael Emmerich]

HOW THE THREE BEASTS PRACTICED THE WAY OF THE BODHISATTVA AND THE RABBIT ROASTED HIMSELF (5:13)

At a time now past, in India, there were three beasts: a rabbit, a fox, and a monkey. In all three sincere aspiration for enlightenment had been aroused, so that they practiced the way of the bodhisattva. Each one thought, "It is because of the sinfulness of our former lives that we have been reborn as lowly beasts. In our former lives we lacked charity toward living beings. We hoarded our worldly goods and gave nothing to others. So deep were our sins that we fell into hell and endured prolonged torment and then, through the karma that yet remained, were reborn as animals. In this life, however, let us sacrifice ourselves." Those far advanced in years, they honored as parents; those a little their senior, they treated as older brothers; those a little younger, they treated tenderly as younger brothers. They abandoned selfish concerns and put the welfare of others first.

The god Indra saw this and thought, "Though their bodies are those of beasts, their minds are noble. Of the beings that are born as men, some kill living creatures, some steal other men's goods, some kill father or mother, some regard their brothers as deadly enemies, some disguise evil thoughts with smiles or harbor rage behind loving countenances, How much more difficult then to believe that animals such as these sincerely aspire to enlightenment! I shall test them." He forthwith assumed the appearance of a man far gone in years, weak, spent, and helpless, and went to where the three beasts were staying. He said,

586. Shakyamuni was the founder of Buddhism; Kasyapa was one of Shakyamuni's ten disciples; the nun Zengo has not been identified; Ananda was a cousin of Shakyamuni, and another of his ten disciples; Rahula was a child of Shakyamuni, and another of his ten disciples. A space has been left in the text in the space where one expects to be told the eagle's identity, presumably because the writer was waiting for further information.

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"I am old and feeble and unable to care for myself. You there, you three beasts, feed me. I have no children; my household is poor and I have nothing to eat. I have heard that you three beasts are deeply compassionate." Hearing him, the three beasts said, "This is exactly what we had intended from the first. He must be fed immediately." The monkey climbed trees and brought back chestnuts, persimmons, pears, jujubes, tangerines, oranges, gooseberries, hazelnuts, vineplums, and akebia fruit; he went out into the fields and brought back cucumbers, eggplants, soybeans, red beans, cowpeas, and three kinds of millet and had the old man eat whatever he liked. The fox went to a neighborhood where there were funeral sheds and brought back plain and fancy rice-cakes, abalone, and bonito and other sorts of fish which people had left there as offerings and gave the old man whatever he thought would suit his taste, until he was sated.

Thus several days passed. The old man said, "These two beasts truly have profound aspirations. They are fully bodhisattvas." Meanwhile the rabbit, filled with eager striving, took a torch, took incense, pricked his ears up and arched his back, widened his eyes and flexed his forelegs and opened the gap in his hindquarters, scampering north, south, east, west in search of food but obtained nothing at all. And so, the monkey and the fox and the old man on the one hand shamed him and on the other hand laughed him to scorn; they egged him on, but his powers did not suffice. The rabbit thought, "I might go to the fields and mountains to look for food, but the fields and mountains are full of danger. I would be killed by men or devoured by beasts. I would only be wasting my life. It would be far better if I were now to sacrifice my body, be eaten by this old man, and depart this present birth forever." He went to the old man and said, "Now I am going out to look for delicacies. While you wait, please gather wood and light a fire." And so the monkey gathered wood and the fox brought fire and lit the wood, and they waited to see if the rabbit might possibly bring anything. The rabbit brought nothing. When the monkey and the fox saw him, they said, "We wondered what you would bring. It was just as we thought all along! You lied to us and fooled us into making a fire so you could warm yourself. How disgusting!" The rabbit said, "I haven't the power to find food and bring it back. But I will roast my own body for him to eat," and he leaped into the fire and was burned to death.

Then the god Indra resumed his original form and transferred to the moon the shape of the rabbit in the fire. He put this image on the moon to show to all sentient beings everywhere. And so, what looks like a cloud on the surface of the moon is the smoke from the fire in which the rabbit was roasting. And when people talk about the rabbit in the moon they mean this image of a rabbit. You myriad folk, whenever you look at the moon, you should think of the story of this rabbit.

[Translated by Marian Ury]

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Tale from China

HOW WANG ZHAOJUN, CONSORT OF THE HAN EMPEROR YUAN, WENT TO THE LAND OF HU (10:5)

The source for this story is the early-twelfth-century poetic treatise *Toshiyori zuinō*, although it seems likely that other texts were consulted as well.

The time is now long past—it was in Han-dynasty China, during the reign of Emperor Yuan[587]—when His Majesty looked over the daughters of his ministers and the rest of the nobles and selected those with beautiful features and lovely figures and commanded that they be brought to the palace so he could get to know them intimately, and gave each of them a place to stay at court, so that the number of women quickly reached four or five hundred and ultimately climbed so extremely high that it was no longer always possible for him to get to know them as intimately as he should.

That's how things were when men from the land of Hu appeared in the capital.[588] They were barbarians—people rather like the Ebisu.[589] So everyone from the emperor down to the ministers and the ordinary officials started debating the issue, trying to decide how these men should be dealt with, although without coming up with any acceptable plans. Except, that is to say, for one wise minister who was able to come up with a plan, which he explained to the emperor. It really doesn't bode at all well for our land that these men have come here from Hu, he said. It seems to me that we ought to find some way to send them back to the place from which they have come. You might accomplish this by choosing one of the less attractive women among the uselessly large population you've got at the palace now to present to these ruffians. I figure if you do that, they're bound to go back, and in the best of spirits. I doubt there could be a better plan than this. That's what the minister said.

The emperor thought it a very good idea when he heard it. He decided he had better go himself to take a look at these women and make up his mind which of them to send away. Except there were such huge crowds of them that just considering the task made his head ache. And then the emperor happened upon an idea of his own: He would summon crowds of painters and let them see the women and have them paint the women's portraits, and then he would compare these portraits and pick one of the less attractive of the women to present to the men from Hu! This was his idea. So he summoned the painters

587. The Han dynasty lasted from 202 B.C.E. to 220 C.E. Emperor Yuan, the tenth to rule the Han, lived from 75 to 33 B.C.E. and reigned from 49 B.C.E. to his death.

588. The land of Hu was found to the northeast of Han.

589. The Ebisu were inhabitants of what is now eastern Japan who refused to submit to the power of the center. It likely was a general term for rebellious people who live far from the capital.

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and showed them the women and gave them his orders. You must paint these women as they are, he said, and then give the pictures to me. The painters began painting, and the women—saddened and distressed at the notion that they might end up the plaything of barbarians and have to go off to some distant and unknown land—began competing with one another, each trying to load her own painter more heavily with gold and silver than anyone else or to give him more of all sorts of other treasures, and the painters got so swept up in the gift giving that they painted even the uglier women in such a way as to give them an air of great beauty, and they gave these paintings to the emperor. Now among all these women there was one named Wang Zhaojun.[590] Since her features were more beautiful than those of the other women, she figured there was really no need for her to give her painter anything at all, she would just let her beauty work its magic. So her painter didn't portray her as she really was but made her look dreadfully vulgar, and he gave this ugly painting to the emperor, who then promptly made up his mind. This woman, he announced, this woman here is the one to send!

Still, something about all this struck the emperor as strange. He commanded the woman to appear before him, and when he saw her . . . this Wang Zhaojun . . . why, she seemed to shoot out rays of light, that's how lovely she was. She was like a jewel, and the rest of the women were like dirt! The emperor was stunned and went about feeling terribly distressed because it was this woman he was going to have to present to the barbarians, and then after a few days the barbarians got wind of the fact that they were to be given—of all the emperor's women—Wang Zhaojun! So they came to the palace and asked the emperor to hand her over, and since he couldn't very well go through the whole process again and pick someone else, in the end he presented Wang Zhaojun to the men from Hu, who sat her on a horse and led her off.

Wang Zhaojun could weep and sigh, but that wouldn't help anything now. The emperor, too, was filled with pity and longing for Wang Zhaojun, but each time the extremity of his suffering drove him to go and look around the place she had lived, he found nothing but the willows of spring swaying in the wind, nightingales singing their sad songs, fallen leaves of autumn carpeting the garden, and the blossoms of the flower of forgetting clustered in tight profusion at the edge of the veranda, and all of these things moved him so profoundly he couldn't even have begun to describe the way he felt, and his pity and longing for Wang Zhaojun only increased.

The men from Hu were thrilled to have been given Wang Zhaojun, and as they led her away they played all sorts of songs on their lutes. And even though Wang Zhaojun continued to weep and sigh, listening to the music did make

590. The dates of Wang Zhaojun's birth and death are uncertain, but it is said that she was presented to Emperor Yuan at the age of seventeen. Later ages created legends about her beauty.

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her feel a little bit better. The men arrived back in the land from which they had come, and they made Wang Zhaojun an empress and lavished infinite care and attention on her. Yet even so, you have to wonder whether Wang Zhaojun ever really enjoyed herself there.

People say that at the time all this happened, everyone heaped curses on Wang Zhaojun. They said it had all happened because she set too much store by her beauty and refused to give her painter any treasures.

[Translated by Michael Emmerich]

Buddhist Tales from Japan

HOW A MONK OF THE DŌJŌJI IN THE PROVINCE OF KII COPIED THE LOTUS SUTRA AND BROUGHT SALVATION TO SERPENTS (14:3)

Volume 14 describes miracles associated with the Lotus Sutra. At the end of this story, the aged monk copies the Lotus Sutra and dreams of the dead man and woman who have been freed of their serpent bodies and reborn in heaven. The tale claims to prove the efficacy and power of the Lotus Sutra, to reveal the compassion of the aged monk, and to demonstrate the "strength of the evil in the female heart." In typical Mahayana fashion, the story stresses the need for intermediaries (such as the Lotus Sutra) and the fact that even the most evil can be saved by Buddhism. But the actual interest of the story extends far beyond this didactic ending.

At a time now past, there were two monks on pilgrimage to Kumano. One was well along in years; the other was young and extraordinarily good-looking. When they came to Muro District, the two of them rented lodgings and settled down for the night. The owner of the house was a widow and young, with two or three maids her only companions. When this woman saw the handsome young monk who had taken lodgings with her, her lustful desires were deeply aroused. She tended assiduously to his comfort. Night fell, and the monks went to bed. At midnight she secretly crept to where the young monk was sleeping, covered him with her dress, and lay down beside him. She nudged him awake; he opened his eyes in fright and confusion. "I never give lodging to travelers," said the woman, "but I let you stay here tonight because from the time I first saw you, this afternoon, I have longed to make you my spouse. I thought that by taking you in for the night I would achieve my aim, and now I have come to you. My husband is dead and I am a widow. Take pity on me!" Hearing her, the monk got up, terrified. He replied, "I have a long-standing vow; in accordance with it, in recent days I have purified myself in mind and body and set out on the distant journey to present myself before

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the deity of Kumano.[591] Should I carelessly break my vow here, the consequences would be dreadful for both of us. Abandon all such thoughts at once." He refused with all the strength at his command. The woman was greatly vexed, and all night long she kept embracing him and teasing and fondling him. The monk tried this argument and that argument to soothe her. "It is not that I refuse, my lady. But just now I'm on a pilgrimage to Kumano. I'll spend a few days there offering lamps and paper strips. Then, when I've turned homeward, I will do as you ask," he promised. The woman believed him and went back to her own bed. At daybreak the monks left the house and set out for Kumano.

The woman reckoned up the day of his promised return. She could think of nothing but her love for the monk and made all sorts of preparations in anticipation. But turning homeward, he stayed away for fear of her; he took a road she did not expect him to take and thus slipped past. She waited until she was weary, but he did not come; and she went to the side of the road and questioned passing travelers. Among them was a monk who had set out from Kumano. "There was a young monk and an old one, dressed in robes of such-and-such a color"—and she described them. "Have they started homeward?" "It is three days now since those two went home," said the monk. Hearing this, she struck her hands together. "He's taken another road and fled!" she thought. In great rage she returned to her house and shut herself into her bedroom. She stayed there a little while without making a sound; and then she died. Her maidservants, who witnessed this, were weeping and wailing, when a poisonous snake forty feet long suddenly issued from her bedroom. It went out of the house and toward the road; then it slithered rapidly down the road by which pilgrims return from Kumano. People saw it and were filled with terror.

The two monks had had a head start, but someone came up to them unasked and said, "Behind you a strange thing is happening. A serpent has appeared that is forty feet long. It crosses mountains and fields and is coming rapidly closer." At this the two monks thought, "Undoubtedly, because the promise to her was broken, the mistress of that house let evil passions arise within her heart and became a poisonous snake and pursues us." Taking to their heels, they ran as fast as they could to a temple called Dōjōji and went in through the gate.

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591. Deity of Kumano, literally, "avatar of Kumano." The deity in question is a Shinto deity, and "avatar" (*gongen*) refers to the idea, widespread in the medieval period, that the Shinto kami are manifestations of buddhas. Pilgrimages to Kumano, in the Kii Peninsula (now Wakayama Prefecture), have been popular among all classes of society since the early tenth century. To have sexual relations with the woman would be not only a violation of the monk's Buddhist vows but a defilement, and thus highly offensive, in the eyes of the Shinto deity. The paper strips (*mitegura*, long strips of paper attached to either side of a pole) and lamps, in the following passage, are characteristic offerings at Shinto shrines.

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"Why have you run here?" asked the monks of the temple. The two told them the story in detail and begged to be saved. The monks of the temple took counsel together; then they lowered a bell, concealed the young monk inside it, and shut the gate. The old monk hid himself in company with the monks of the temple.

After a little while, the serpent came to the temple. The gates were shut—no matter, she crossed over them and entered the compound. She went all around the halls once, twice; and when she came to the door of the bell-hall where the monk was sheltering, she rapped on it a hundred times with her tail. In the end, she smashed the leaves of the door and entered. She encircled the bell and beat upon the dragon head at its top with her tail; this lasted five or six hours. For all their fear, the monks were so amazed that they opened the doors on all four sides and gathered to watch. Tears of blood flowed from her eyes; raising her head, she licked her lips and slithered rapidly away whence she had come. Before the eyes of the monks, the great bell of the temple blazed and was burned in the poisonous hot breath of the serpent. It was too hot to come near. But they threw water on it to cool it, and when they lifted it away to look at the monk, they saw that fire had consumed him utterly. Not even his skeleton remained. All that there was, was a little ash. Upon seeing this, the old monk returned home amid his tears.

Later, an aged monk, who was a senior monk of the temple, had a dream in which a serpent even larger than the one before came straight to him and addressed him face to face: "Do you know who I am? I am the monk who was hidden inside the bell. The evil woman became a poisonous snake; in the end, I was made her captive and became her husband. I have been reborn in this vile, filthy body and suffer measureless torment. I now hope to free myself of this pain, but my own powers are insufficient—even though I honored the Lotus Sutra while I was alive. I thought that if only you, holy sir, would bestow on us the vastness of your mercy, I might escape this pain. I beseech you, on our account let limitless compassion arise within your heart; in purity copy the chapter of the Lotus Sutra called 'The Limitless Life of the Tathagata.' Dedicate its merit to us two serpents and free us thereby from our torments. Except by the power of the Lotus Sutra, how are we to escape them?" Thus he spoke, and departed. The monk awoke from his dream.

When the monk pondered this afterward, his piety was at once aroused. He himself copied out the chapter; and discarding his robe and bowl,[592] he invited a great many monks to celebrate a full day's Dharma assembly and dedicated its merit that the two serpents might be freed of their torments. Later, he dreamed that a monk and a woman, their happy faces wreathed in smiles, came to the Dōjōji and saluted him reverently. "Because you have cultivated the roots

592. In other words, at the cost of his last earthly possessions.

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of enlightenment, we two were instantly rid of our snakes' bodies and set on the path of felicitous rebirth. The woman was reborn in the Trayastrimsa heaven, and the monk has ascended to the Tusita heaven." Having spoken, they departed separately, ascending into the sky. The monk awoke from his dream.

The aged monk rejoiced deeply, and he revered all the more the miraculous power of the Lotus Sutra. In truth, the Sutra's wonder-working powers are uncanny. That the serpents cast off their serpents' bodies and were reborn afresh in the heavens is due solely to the Lotus Sutra. Everyone who witnessed this affair or heard of it was moved to belief in the Lotus Sutra and copied and chanted it. Rare, too, was the heart of the aged monk. To have done such a compassionate deed, he must in a previous life have been their wise and good friend. Now think, that evil woman's passion for the young monk must also have come from a bond formed in a previous life.

You see, therefore, the strength of the evil in the female heart. It is for this reason that the Buddha strictly forbids approaching women. Know this, and avoid them. So the tale's been told, and so it's been handed down.

[Translated by Marian Ury]

HOW KAYA NO YOSHIFUJI, OF BITCHŪ PROVINCE, BECAME THE HUSBAND OF A FOX AND WAS SAVED BY KANNON (16:17)

Volume 16 focuses on miracles of Kannon, the bodhisattva of mercy. In this story, a layman with a cane, who is a transformation of the Kannon bodhisattva, appears and brings out a "strange, black, monkeylike creature" that turns out to be Yoshifuji, who has been seduced by a fox. The story reveals the power of Kannon and takes up the theme of attachment, which is blinding and deceiving. Here, as elsewhere, Buddhism evinces profound skepticism about external appearances and warns us not to be deluded.

At a time now past, in the village of Ashimori in Kaya District of Bitchū Province, there lived a man named Kaya no Yoshifuji. His household had gotten rich through the trade in coins.[593] He had a weakness for women and was prey to lustful thoughts.

Now, in autumn of the eighth year of Kanpei [896], while his wife was away in the capital and he, left by himself in his household, was a temporary widower, he went out for a stroll just at nightfall and suddenly caught sight of a beautiful young woman. She was someone he had never seen before. His lustful feelings were aroused, but the woman looked as though she would flee if he tried to touch her. He went up to her and took her by the hand. "Who are you?" he

593. Coins imported from China.

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asked. She was brilliantly dressed, but she said, "I'm no one." How charming she looked as she said that! "Come to my house," said Yoshifuji. "That would be unseemly," she said, and tried to draw away. "Where do you live, then?" said Yoshifuji; "I'll go with you." "Just over there," she said, walking on. Yoshifuji walked with her, holding her hand.

Close by, there was a handsome house; inside, too, it was sumptuously furnished. "Odd," thought Yoshifuji, "I never knew there was anything like this here." Within, there was a great clamor, as men and women, persons of every degree, together cried, "Her Ladyship's come!" "This must be the daughter of the house," Yoshifuji thought, delightedly, and that night he slept with her.

The next morning a man who was evidently the master of the house appeared. "Congratulations," he said to Yoshifuji, "this bond was predestined! Now you must stay with us." Yoshifuji was treated very hospitably. He became utterly attached to the woman; they vowed eternal love, and waking and sleeping he spent all his time with her. He never wondered how his house and children might be faring.

In his own home, when he had not reappeared after nightfall, people thought, "Maybe he's crawling around somewhere in secret, in his usual way." But when it was quite dark and he still had not reappeared, there were some who took it amiss. "What a madman he is! Have the servants look for him." The night was more than half gone, but though they searched the neighborhood, he was not to be found. Could he have gone on a journey? But his clothing was still there; he had disappeared wearing only a light jacket. Day broke and the uproar continued. They looked everywhere that he might have gone but found absolutely nothing. "If he were a young man with unsettled ideas, he might have gone off suddenly to become a monk. But at his age? It's a very strange prank—if it is one." Meanwhile, where Yoshifuji was living, the years passed. His wife was pregnant, and after nine months she gave birth, without complications, to a son, so that he became even more deeply attached to her. It seemed to him indeed that time was passing swiftly; everything in his life was just as he desired it.

In his own home, after he disappeared, he was sought for, but without success. His older brother, the Senior Officer Toyonaka, his younger brothers, the Supervisor Toyokage and Toyotsune, who was priest of the Kibitsuhiko shrine, and Yoshifuji's only son, Tadasada, were all affluent men. In their mutual grief, they decided to try at least to discover his corpse. Good resolves arose in them, and they felled a kae tree to make an image of the eleven-headed Kannon. The statue they made was the same height as Yoshifuji. They petitioned it. "At least let us see his corpse," they pleaded. Moreover, from the day on which he disappeared, they began invocations of the Buddha and sutra readings for the welfare of his soul in the next world.

A layman who walked with a staff came suddenly to the house where Yoshifuji was now living. At the sight of him, the whole household, from the master on down, fell into utter terror and fled. The layman jabbed Yoshifuji in the back

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with his staff, forcing him out through a narrow passageway. At twilight on the thirteenth day after Yoshifuji's disappearance, his people were mourning him. "What a strange way he disappeared! And it was just about this time of night, wasn't it?" they were saying to each other, when from underneath the storehouse in front of them a strange, black, monkeylike creature crawled out on all fours. "What's this, what's this!" They crowded in to look at it. "It's me," said the thing—and the voice was Yoshifuji's. His son, Tadasada, thought it uncanny, but since it was so obviously his father's voice, he dropped to the ground and pulled him up. "What happened to you?" he said. Yoshifuji said, "It was while I was a widower and by myself. All the time I kept thinking how much I wanted to have a woman.[594] And then, unexpectedly, I became the son-in-law of a high-ranking gentleman. During the years I've lived in his household I've gotten a son. He's a beautiful child. I held him in my arms day and night and wouldn't let go of him ever. I'm going to make him my heir. You, Tadasada, I'll make my second son. That's to show my regard for his mother's high rank." Tadasada heard this and said, "Where is your young son, sir?" "Over there," said Yoshifuji, and pointed to the storehouse.

Tadasada and all the rest of the company were dumbfounded. They saw that Yoshifuji had the appearance of a man emaciated by severe illness; and they saw that he had on the clothes that he was wearing when he disappeared. They had a servant look under the floor of the storehouse. A lot of foxes were there, and they scattered and fled. That was the place where Yoshifuji had lain. When they saw this they understood it all: Yoshifuji had been tricked by a fox and had become her husband and was no longer in his right mind. They immediately summoned an eminent monk to pray for him and called in a yin–yang master to exorcise the evil influences; and they had Yoshifuji bathed repeatedly. But whatever they tried, he still bore no resemblance to his former self. Afterward, little by little, he returned to his senses; how ashamed he must have been, and how queer he must have felt. Yoshifuji had been under the storehouse for thirteen days, but to him it had seemed thirteen years. Moreover, the beams under the storehouse were only four or five inches above the ground; to Yoshifuji they had seemed high and broad. He had thought himself in a great house that one went in and out of freely. It was all because of the magic power of the spirit-foxes. As for the layman who entered and struck about with his cane, he was a transformation of the Kannon that had been made and dedicated to Yoshifuji's welfare.

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594. Thus—by having sexual longings—making himself an easy victim for foxes, as the Japanese readers would have recognized. The original readers would have been expected to spot more subtle clues: when the young woman, asked her name, says "I'm no one"; when the worried relatives, wondering whether he is not off on a secret love affair, suggest jocosely (and all too accurately) that he may be "crawling" about somewhere.

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This shows why everyone should invoke and meditate on Kannon. Yoshifuji lived more than ten years without illness and died in his sixty-first year.

This story was told to the Imperial Adviser Miyoshi no Kiyotsura[595] when he was governor of Bitchū. So the tale's been told, and so it's been handed down.

[Translated by Marian Ury]

HOW THE GOVERNOR OF MIKAWA, ŌE NO SADAMOTO, TOOK VOWS (19:2)

Volume 19 contains tales of religious conversion or renunciation. This tale, which also appears in *A Collection of Tales from Uji* (*Uji shūi monogatari*, nos. 52 and 172), actually consists of two conversion stories. In the first, the attachment to the beloved causes the man to sleep with the dead body until the putrefaction awakens him. In the next conversion, the pheasants that are butchered and roasted awaken the protagonist. Typically, the awakening (*hosshin*) is followed by an event (in this case, the appearance of the family) that tests the resolve of the newly converted. The setsuwa ends with a tale of good works, in which a dirty beggar turns out to be the bodhisattva Mañjuśrī, whose identity is revealed by the purple cloud. This last story describes the virtuous acts of the Jakushō, who created a bath for commoners.

Long ago, during the reign of Emperor En'yū,[596] there was a certain governor of Mikawa Province[597] called Ōe no Sadamoto.[598] He was the son of Narimitsu,[599] a scholar who held a high position at court in the Bureau of Ceremonies. This Sadamoto was a benevolent man whose talents surpassed those of his contemporaries, and because of his seniority as a man of the sixth rank, he was made governor of Mikawa.

In time his thoughts strayed from his original wife to a young woman of stunning beauty, and he was scarcely able to tear himself away from her. His original wife, blinded by jealousy, suddenly forgot the vows of marriage and left him. Then Sadamoto took the young woman as his wife and had her accompany him to Mikawa when he was made governor of that province.

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595. Miyoshi no Kiyotsura (or Kiyoyuki, 847–918) was, among other things, a scholar of Chinese. Among his numerous works is a collection of anecdotes of the supernatural. This is one of the few places in which the compiler of the *Konjaku* may be explicitly acknowledging his immediate source.

596. Reigned from 970 to 984.

597. Today, the east part of Aichi Prefecture.

598. Ōe no Sadamoto (964–1032), well known as both a nobleman and a holy figure, died in China.

599. A well-known man of letters who died in 987.

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In time, after they had gone to Mikawa, the young woman became seriously ill and suffered greatly for quite a while. Torn by grief and pain, Sadamoto offered many different prayers, but she was not cured of her illness; in fact, her once-beautiful appearance deteriorated with the passage of time. Sadamoto's grief at seeing this cannot be described. But the woman's illness became worse and eventually she died. After her death he was not able to endure his grief, so postponing her funeral for several days, he lay embracing her. After several days had passed a horrid, putrid odor came from her mouth when he kissed her; this revolted him, and weeping he buried her. After the funeral Sadamoto realized, "The world is a revolting place," and religious resolve rose suddenly in his heart.

In time, at a festival of that province known as the Festival of the Wind, Sadamoto saw people capturing wild boars and slicing them up while they were still living; this caused his resolve to become even stronger. He decided that he would leave the province quickly, so when he saw that someone had captured a pheasant and brought it back still alive, the governor said, "Well, let's cook this bird while it's still living and eat it. I'd like to try a little test to see if the taste isn't better."

Those dull retainers who were merely trying to ingratiate themselves with the governor said when they heard this, "Wonderful! Of course, that should make it much tastier." They thus encouraged him, but those retainers who had some sense thought, "He's up to something strange."

They brought the living pheasant and held it down to keep it from fluttering while they plucked it. Some of the men, seeing the bird drop tears of blood from its eyes and blink repeatedly as it stared at them, were unable to bear the sight and left. Others laughed heartlessly while plucking the pheasant, saying, "Cry, you bird!" When they had finished with the plucking, they began to slice the bird up; the blood came dribbling down the blade of the sword, so they wiped the sword and continued slicing the bird. At this point, the bird screamed strangely, as though it were at the end of its endurance, and then it died. After they had finished slicing the bird, they tried cooking it.

The governor had been watching and listening intently to the whole thing, and when he heard people say, "Extraordinary! The taste is extraordinarily better than slicing up and cooking a bird which is already dead," large tears dropped from his eyes and he wailed loudly. The men who had said "It's delicious" became afraid. That same day the governor left his post and returned to the capital. As his resolve was strong, he cut off his topknot and became a monk, calling himself Jakushō. He is known in the world as the novice of Mikawa. He had such strange things as this done so he could strengthen his heart even more as he watched.

After this, when Jakushō was once begging in the capital, he came to a house where he was called in and told to sit down on a cushion so that a fine offering could be brought for him to eat. A woman dressed in fine silk was sitting behind

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a partition, the screen of which had been slightly raised. When he looked more closely, he saw it was his wife who had left him long ago. They looked at each other, and the woman said, "You fool! I just wanted to see you begging like this!" Jakushō, however, did not seem at all ashamed but merely heartily ate the offering that had been brought, saying, "Thank you very much." Then he left. His was an extremely wondrous heart. Because his resolve was strong, he could meet with even such people as his wife and still remain calm. This is a precious thing.

After this Jakushō decided, "I will go to China to worship at the worthy holy places there." After making up his mind to go, he thought of his son who was living as a monk on Mount Hiei. In order to bid farewell before his trip to China, Jakushō climbed the mountain and worshiped at the temples and shrines there, and on his way back he went to knock at the door of his son's quarters. It was the middle of the Seventh Month and the moon was very bright. Jakushō met his son in the courtyard and said, "I am determined to worship at the precious holy places and have decided to go to China to do so." He added, "To return would be difficult, so this will probably be the last time we will see each other. You should certainly stay here on this mountain and be unrelenting in your scholarship and study of the rites." He wept as he spoke and his son's weeping also was without limit.

After speaking like this, Jakushō set off to return to the capital, and his son accompanied him as far as Ōgoku. The moon was very bright, the dew was glistening, and the cries of the various insects sounded beautiful. This beauty touched the monks to the quick and they both were grief stricken. His son wanted to accompany him to the foot of the mountain, but Jakushō said, "Go home quickly," and disappeared into the mist. From there his son returned weeping.

After this Jakushō crossed over to China and worshiped at the various holy places as he had desired. He was received by the Chinese emperor and honored as a holy person. In time the emperor gathered all the holy men of the country together, decorated a hall, prepared offerings, and held a most impressive ceremony. At the ceremony the emperor said, "Servants are not permitted to enter the banquet hall today. I want all of you to simply send the bowls before you flying out to receive your offerings." His intention was to test Jakushō on Japan.

So, obeying these instructions, the monks, starting from the man of the highest rank and proceeding in order of descending ranks, caused their bowls to fly out to receive their offerings. As the most recent person to have taken the vows, Jakushō was the lowest-ranking person there. When his turn came he took his bowl, and as he stood up, someone said to him, "What are you doing? You are supposed to cause your bowl to fly out and receive the offering." At this Jakushō put down his bowl and sat down, saying, "Causing one's rice bowl to fly is a special principle. It is said that during ancient times in Japan there were people who had learned this principle, but in these latter days of the Buddhist

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law,[600] there is no one to carry it out. It has become something dead. Thus, by what means am I to make my bowl fly out?" Taunted by the cries, "The bowl of the holy man from Japan is slow, so slow!" Jakushō was pained and prayed from the bottom of his heart, "Save me, O three treasures of Japan.[601] If I do not cause my bowl to fly out, it will be a deep shame for my country."

When he prayed thus, his bowl went spinning out quickly like a top and received its offering and returned even faster than did any of the other bowls. At that time everyone from the emperor down through the ministers and the minor officials worshiped, and their awe was without limit. After this the emperor decorated Jakushō without limit.

Again, when Jakushō was once visiting Mount Wutai[602] and was practicing the various virtues, he heated water and was about to bathe the common people. While they were putting down their offerings before being bathed, an extremely filthy woman carrying a baby and accompanied by a dog came and stood in front of him. This woman was covered with scabs and her filth was without limit. When people saw her they cursed her for being so filthy. Jakushō calmed them and gave the woman some food, trying to send her on her way. However, the woman said, "I have scabs on my body and it is very hard for me to endure them, so I came here to bathe. Please let me bathe in the virtue of the water for a while." When the people heard this they cursed her and drove her off.

The woman fled to the rear and secretly entered the bath house, where she splashed around in the water and bathed, still holding the child and accompanied by the dog. The people heard this and said, "Let's get her out of here." Going into the bath house they looked around, but she had completely disappeared. Surprised and wondering, the people then went outside and looked around. A purple cloud was shining above the eaves of the bath house and rising into the sky. They gazed at it and said, "That was the Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī who came here for us in the form of a woman." They wept from grief and worshiped, but there was nothing to be done, so they gave up their crying.

These facts were related by Nengu, a disciple of Jakushō, who went to China with him and later returned to Japan. The emperor of that country honored Jakushō and designated him a *daishi*, or grand master, giving him the name Entsū.

Jakushō, too, took the vows because of fate, and it is said that he went to other lands and was honored in such a way.

[Translated by Michael Kelsey]

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600. *Mappō*.

601. The jewels, the sword, and the sacred mirror compose the "three treasures" (*sanbō*). *Sanbō* can also refer to the three Buddhist treasures (the Buddha, the Buddhist law, and the monastic order), but interestingly Jakushō invokes the native treasures.

602. In Shansi Province, the legendary home of Mañjuśrī (J. Monju).

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Secular Tales from Japan

HOW A GROUP OF NUNS WENT INTO THE MOUNTAINS, ATE SOME MUSHROOMS, AND DANCED (28:28)

Volume 28 consists of humorous tales, which encompass characters from every level of society and take place both inside and outside the capital. Interestingly, court nobility become particular targets of laughter.

The time is now long past when a group of woodcutters who lived in Kyoto made a wrong turn while walking through the mountains to the north of the city, and since they really had no idea which way they ought to be heading, about four or five of them ended up sitting there in the middle of the mountains, moaning and sighing, and they were still sitting there when they saw a group of people coming down from someplace farther up the mountain. The woodcutters watched these people, thinking it extremely peculiar that they should be coming from that direction, and they were wondering what sort of people these hikers could be when the group came into view and it became clear that they were nuns—four or five of them, all dancing like crazy. The sight filled the woodcutters with fear. Uh oh, they thought. If you come across nuns dancing around like this, you can be sure they're not really people at all—these must be *tengu*, or maybe *oni* or *kami* of some sort.[603] The woodcutters were still sitting there staring and worrying when the dancing nuns caught sight of them and started heading their way and went on heading their way, drawing nearer and nearer. The woodcutters were seized with terror. Still the nuns kept on getting closer and closer. So the woodcutters called out to them: Hey there, just what kind of nuns are you supposed to be, coming down from the mountain's peak and doing a dance like that? And the nuns replied: No doubt the sight of us dancing down from the mountain's peak like this has filled you men with fear. But as a matter of fact we're just ordinary nuns; we live quite close by. We came out together to gather flowers—we wanted some to use when we made our offerings to the Buddha—but we made a wrong turn somewhere and couldn't figure out how to get back, and then we happened across these mushrooms, and we were terribly hungry, you see, so hungry that even though we knew we might get sick if we ate them, we figured we might as well pick a few and eat them anyway, it would certainly be better than starving to death, and so we picked a bunch and roasted them and nibbled at a few, and they were so wonderfully sweet we could hardly believe it—and ever since we ate those mushrooms we've been going around like this, we simply can't stop dancing. It all seems very strange, even to us, but then . . . well, it's very strange, it really

603. *Tengu* are long-nosed, red-faced, supernatural beings who live deep in the mountains and love to trick people; *oni* are demons; and *kami* are gods.

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is. That's what the nuns had to say for themselves. Now that they had heard the story, the woodcutters found the whole thing even more infinitely bizarre.

Now it just so happened that the woodcutters were also feeling the need for a bite of something, and they figured they might as well ask the nuns to give them some of the masses of uneaten mushrooms they had brought along with them—this would be much better than dying, of course—and so they asked the nuns for some mushrooms, which they ate, and then they too started dancing uncontrollably. So the nuns and the woodcutters danced together, laughing. Then after a while they emerged from their delirium, like drunk people sobering up, and without having any idea which paths they were on they all managed to make their way back to the places from which they had come. I'm told that ever since this happened, people refer to this variety of mushroom as "the dancing mushroom."

But really, the whole thing seems very mysterious. Even today there are things called "dancing mushrooms," and yet not everyone who eats them ends up dancing. People say they find this extremely difficult to comprehend.

[Translated by Michael Emmerich]

HOW FUJIWARA NO NOBUTADA, GOVERNOR OF SHINANO, TOOK A TUMBLE AT MISAKA (28:38)

This story is noted for its depiction of the psychology of the provincial governor (*zuryō*) class. The story became famous for the saying (*kotowaza*): "Whenever a governor stumbles, he snatches a handful of dirt," a phrase that appears at the end of the tale. The setsuwa reveals the tendency of the nobility who came from the capital to the provinces to try to gather as much wealth for themselves as possible. The provincial governor is the object of laughter (that he should ignore death for a few mushrooms) and detestation (for his greed) as well as awe (for his single-minded pursuit of gain).

At a time now past, there was a man named Fujiwara no Nobutada who was governor of Shinano.[604] He had journeyed to Shinano upon his appointment and, having served his term, was returning to the capital. He rode in the midst of a long procession, packhorses loaded with his goods, his retainers (more men than you could count) on horseback. As he was crossing the suspension bridge at Misaka[605] his horse caught a hind foot on a plank at the rim and slipped and fell. Horse and rider together went tumbling head over heels into the ravine.

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604. Shinano (now Nagano Prefecture). Nobutada was appointed governor in 982, and his successor was appointed in the spring of 988, so it seems likely that this incident took place in 988.

605. Misaka Pass, a renowned danger spot on the border between ancient Shinano and Mino Provinces.

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The ravine was immeasurably deep, and it seemed therefore scarcely likely that the governor could still be alive. Far below could be seen the topmost branches of hundred-foot cypresses and cedars, but try as they might, none of his men could tell how much farther it was to the ground. No, they thought, there was not the faintest chance that the governor could be unharmed after such a fall. They all dismounted and, kneeling in a row at the rim of the bridge, peered helplessly into the depths.

"It's hopeless. If only there were somewhere not too steep, so we could climb down and find out what has happened to him. We'll have to go on for another day and circle back from the shallow end to look for him. There's no way at all to get down here." One after another, all were exclaiming in dismay. And then faintly, from far below, a shout was heard.

"That was his lordship the governor," they said and gave an answering yell. By listening intently they could just make out his words.

"He's telling us something. Listen everyone! What is it?"

"He says we're to let down a travel hamper[606] on a long rope."

They knew now that the governor was alive, something had broken his fall. A great many men collected their reins, tied them end to end, and fastened them to the hamper, which they lowered in all haste. The rope was paid out until none was left; only then did it begin to go slack. It must have hit bottom, they thought.

From the depths of the ravine came the voice: "Now pull it up."

"He's telling us to pull," they said.

The hamper seemed extraordinarily light as they reeled it up.

"How light it is! Surely it should be heavier if the governor is in it," they said. "It must be that he's catching hold of branches as he rises," someone suggested.

All pulled together. When they had drawn the basket all the way up, they saw that it held nothing but mushrooms. They stared into one another's faces uncomprehendingly. "What on earth?" they said.

Once more a shout was heard from below. "All right, let it down again." And so they did. Again they heard the shout to pull it up. They obeyed, and this time the hamper was extremely heavy. Many men heaved at the rope to reel it in. This time indeed the governor was riding in the hamper. With one hand he was clutching the rope; in the other he carried three clusters of mushrooms. He was hoisted up and set down on the bridge amid general rejoicing.

"Sir, are these some special kind of mushroom?" the retainers asked him.

The governor replied, "At the time of the fall, my horse went straight down to the bottom of the ravine. I felt myself spinning through the air after him when, unexpectedly, I fell into a dense tangle of branches. I grabbed at them until I came to rest against a large branch below. Using it as a foothold, I made

606. Travel hamper (*hatago*), large baskets used to carry fodder for horses.

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my way to the fork of the tree and stayed there with my arms around the trunk. So many mushrooms are growing on that tree that I couldn't take my eyes off them. I took just the ones within easy reach and had you haul them up in the hamper. But there must be a lot left—more than I know how to say, in fact. It's a terrible loss, a terrible loss, and I feel it keenly."

"Oh, indeed, sir, a great loss," said the retainers, and burst out laughing together.

"Don't talk nonsense," said the governor. "You fellows are the kind who would climb a mountain of jewels and come back empty-handed, I can see that. You know the saying: whenever a governor stumbles, he snatches a handful of dirt."

His senior deputy was inwardly repelled but said, "Right you are, sir. How could you fail to take whatever might come into your hands? It might be expected of anyone. But only a man endowed with your innate sagacity would carry on unperturbed in the face of death and pick mushrooms quite as though nothing were in the least amiss. You govern your province with the same wisdom, garnering taxes and enriching yourself to your heart's content: that's why the people of the province love and cherish you like a parent. And so, sir, what can we do but congratulate you." The speech went on and on as the others secretly burst into guffaws.

Now think, such was the governor's greed that even in straits like these his first thought was for the mushrooms: he picked them and sent them up without a tremor of fear. You can imagine, therefore, what he was like when the opportunities for gain were easier. How people who heard this must have detested him—and how they must have laughed! So the tale's been told, and so it's been handed down.

[Translated by Marian Ury]

HOW A THIEF CLIMBED TO THE UPPER STORY OF RASHŌMON GATE AND SAW A CORPSE (29:18)

Volume 29 is about evil acts, particularly robbery and murder. The two stories here, "How a Thief Climbed to the Upper Story of Rashōmon Gate and Saw a Corpse" and "How a Man Who Was Accompanying His Wife to Tanba Province Got Trussed Up at Oeyama," were used by the modern author Akutagawa Ryūnosuke (author of *Rashōmon*) and then by the modern film director Kurosawa Akira in *Rashōmon*. Like many of the secular setsuwa, the story is about how to survive in this chaotic world. In the second story, instead of reprimanding the rapist, the setsuwa reprimands the husband for his stupidity. One must be alert for danger; anything can happen in this world.

At a time now past, there was a man who had come to the capital from the direction of Settsu Province[607] in order to steal. The sun was still high, so he

607. That is, from the south. (Settsu is part of modern Hyōgo Prefecture.)

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concealed himself beneath Rashōmon Gate.[608] Shujaku Avenue, to the north, was thronged, and he stood there waiting for the street to become quiet; but then as he waited he heard a great many people approaching from the other direction, and to avoid being seen by them he climbed silently to the upper story. There he saw the faint light of a torch.

This was strange, the thief thought, and he peered through the lattices. A young woman was lying dead. A torch had been lit at her pillow, and beside it sat a white-haired crone who was plucking and tearing the hair from the corpse's head.

The thief saw but could not comprehend. What could these be? he wondered. He was afraid, but he thought, "They may only be ghosts. I'll try scaring them off." He quietly opened the door and drew his sword. "You there, you there," he cried, and rushed in upon them.

The crone cowered in confusion and rubbed her hands together. "Who are you, old woman, and what are you doing here?" the thief asked.

"I lost my mistress, sir," she said, "and as there was no one to bury her, I brought her here. See what nice long hair she has. I'm plucking it out to make a wig. Spare me!"

The thief stripped the corpse and the old woman of the clothes they wore and stole the hair. He ran to the ground and made his getaway.

There used to be a lot of corpses in the upper story of that gate. It's a fact that when people died and for some reason or other couldn't be buried they were brought there.

The thief told someone what had happened, and whoever heard his story passed it on. So the tale's been told, and so it's been handed down.

[Translated by Marian Ury]

HOW A MAN WHO WAS ACCOMPANYING HIS WIFE TO TANBA PROVINCE GOT TRUSSED UP AT ŌEYAMA (29:23)

At a time now past, a man who lived in the capital had a wife who came from Tanba Province. He accompanied her on a journey to Tanba. The husband had his wife ride their horse while he himself walked along behind, keeping guard, with a quiver with ten arrows on his back and a bow in his hand. Not far from Ōeyama there fell in with them a brawny-looking young man with a sword at his waist.

They walked along together, each inquiring politely where the other was going and chatting about this and that. The new man, the one with the sword, said, "This is a famous sword that I'm wearing, an heirloom from Mutsu

608. The Rashōmon Gate was at the southern end of the capital. In historical sources, it is described as splendidly ornamented, but it fell into disrepair at an early time, and its upper story—it had two stories—was thought to be the abode of supernatural beings and worse.

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Province. Look at it," and he unsheathed it. In truth it was a magnificent blade, and when the husband saw it he wanted it above all things. The new man saw the expression on his face and said, "Do you want this sword? I'll trade it for that bow you're carrying." The man with the bow knew his bow to be of no great value, while the sword was exceptionally fine. What with his desire for the sword and his greed for a profitable bargain, he made the exchange without a second thought.

Well then, as they were walking on the new man said, "I look ridiculous carrying a bow and nothing else. While we're in the mountains lend me a couple of arrows. After all, sir, we're traveling together, so it's all the same where you're concerned."

To the first man this seemed reasonable enough. He was in high good humor at having exchanged his worthless bow for a valuable sword, and so he took out two arrows and handed them over as he'd been asked. The new man walked behind, the bow and two arrows ready in his grasp. The first man walked ahead, with the sword at his waist and the useless quiver on his back.

After a time the travelers went into a grove to have their afternoon meal. The new man said, "It's not nice to eat where people can see. Let's go on a little," and so they went deep into the trees. Then, just as the husband had put his arms around his wife to lift her from the horse, the other man suddenly fitted an arrow to his bow, aimed at him, and pulled it taut. "I'll shoot if you move," he said.

The first man hadn't expected anything at all like this and stood looking at him dumbfounded. The other threatened him. "Go on into the mountains, go on!" Afraid for his life, he went with his wife perhaps half a mile farther into the mountains. "Throw away your sword and knife," the other commanded, and he threw them away. The other man approached, picked them up and knocked him down, and tied him fast to a tree with the bridle rope.

Then this man went up to the woman and looked at her closely. She was twenty or a little older and of humble station but adorably pretty. Her beauty aroused his desire, and forgetting any other purpose, he made her take off her clothes. The woman had no way of resisting, and so she stripped as he told her to. Then he too undressed and embraced her and lay with her. The woman was helpless and had to obey. All the while her husband watched in his trusses. What must he have thought!

Afterward, the man arose, dressed himself as before, strapped the quiver on his back and the sword to his waist and, bow in hand, hoisted himself onto the horse. To the woman he said, "I'm sorry, but I must go away. I have no choice. As a favor to you I'll spare your husband's life. I'm taking the horse so I can make a quick escape." And he galloped away, no one knows where.

After that, the wife went up to her husband and freed his bonds. He looked stupefied. "You wretch!" she exclaimed. "You good-for-nothing coward! From this day forward I'll never trust you again." Her husband said not a word, and together they went to Tanba.

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The rapist had a sense of shame, for after all he did not rob the woman of her clothes. But the husband was a worthless fool: in the mountains to hand his bow and arrows to someone he'd never before laid eyes on was surely the height of stupidity.

No one knows what became of the other man. So the tale goes, and so it's been handed down.

[Translated by Marian Ury]

HOW A POOR MAN LEFT HIS WIFE AND HOW SHE BECAME THE WIFE OF THE GOVERNOR OF SETTSU (30:5)

Volume 30 focuses on love tales. This story also appears in *Yamato monogatari* (a Heian uta-monogatari) and was later rewritten by the modern novelist Tanizaki Junichirō in "Reed Cutter" (Ashikari). Unlike most setsuwa, this one has poetry, and it belongs to the older genre of the uta-monogatari. Because of its focus on love and the relations between men and women, it belongs to the aristocratic monogatari tradition, but it differs in its concentration on the lowly position of the man.

At a time now past, there was in the capital a man of no special standing. He had no friends and neither parents nor relations, and having nowhere of his own to lodge, he went to others for employment. But since none of his masters paid him the attention he thought he deserved, he went from place to place, always in hope of something better. Everywhere, though, it was the same. He was unfit to serve a noble family, and he had no way of earning a living. His wife was young and good-looking, a woman of refined temperament who clung loyally to her impoverished husband. In the depths of his anxiety he told her, "I thought that we would spend our whole lives together, but with every passing day I become poorer. I wonder if our marriage is not the cause of my misfortune. How would it be if we were to go our separate ways?" His wife disagreed. "Good and ill fortune comes from the karma of our previous lives. I was willing to starve with you if need be. But it is hopeless to go on in this way, and if you really think our marriage might be the cause, let us try separating." This was what the man wanted, and amid tears and vows of eternal love, they parted.

Afterward the wife, being young and good-looking, found employment at the house of a man [whose name is no longer known]. Since she was a woman of refinement, he used her with great kindness, and when his wife died he called her to serve him intimately. He had her sleep by his side and became fond of her. As time passed he came to treat this mistress as his wife and entrusted all his household affairs to her.

Meanwhile this man became governor of Settsu.[609] The woman passed her years in ever increasing prosperity. Her original husband had thought his luck

609. Now part of modern Hyōgo Prefecture.

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might improve if he were separated from her but instead he fell on even harder times. In the end he was unable to remain in the capital and in the course of his wanderings went to Settsu Province. He became a mere farmhand whom others hired, doing peasants' work, tilling fields and cutting wood. But he couldn't get used to the idea, couldn't do the work at all. His employer sent him to the bay of Naniwa[610] to cut reeds. He went to Naniwa to cut reeds—and the governor and his wife went to Settsu Province. By Naniwa Bay they halted their carriage to enjoy the view. With their numerous retainers and followers they ate and drank and amused themselves. The wife sat in the carriage with her ladies, admiring the view and the interesting and charming spectacles it offered. There were a great many people of the lowest class cutting reeds; and among them one who, though of the same class, seemed somehow to be of finer stuff.

The governor's wife saw him and stared: how strangely like her former husband he was! Perhaps she was mistaken, she thought, and looked harder; but it was indeed he. He made a strange figure, standing there cutting reeds. What a pitiful wretch he was! she thought. Surely he must be suffering for the sins of a previous life. Tears welled up, but pretending that nothing was amiss, she summoned a servant. "There's a certain man among the reed cutters," she said, describing him. "Call him over." The messenger ran. "You there—over to their honors' carriage," he said. It was so unexpected that the man just gaped at him in astonishment. "Hurry up!" the messenger shouted. Scared, the man dropped the reeds he had cut, thrust his scythe into his belt, and went up to the carriage.

Observing him from close by, she knew that it truly was he. He wore a hemp shirt, black with filth and without sleeves, that scarcely reached his knees. A soiled cloth covered his head. Earth clung to his face, to his hands and feet: he was utterly filthy. Leeches were sucking at the backs of his knees and his shanks, exposing the raw flesh. The governor's lady saw him with pity and revulsion, and she had one of her people give him food and saké. She examined his face as he squatted in front of her carriage eating and found it repellent. To her maids she said, "This man seems of a better class than the other reed cutters. I feel sorry for him," and she had someone take a robe from within the carriage, with instructions to give it to him. On a scrap of paper that accompanied the robe, she wrote: "*'I'll be fortunate,'*[611] *you thought, and so we parted—why then, why then do you live by Naniwa Bay?*"

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610. Naniwa was the ancient name for modern Osaka.

611. There are untranslatable puns in this poem and the text, sources of their wit and, in part, of their pathos. *Ashikaraji*, or "I'll be fortunate" (more literally, "it will not be ill omened"), also means "I'll not cut reeds"; *ashikaru*, or "I'm unfortunate indeed" (literally, "it is ill omened"), also means "I cut reeds."

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The man received the robe. The gift was entirely unexpected. Looking at it in wonderment, he saw a scrap of paper with something written on it; and when he took that and saw what was written, he thought, "Why, this is my former wife!" How sad and shameful was his destiny, he now realized. "Give me your inkstone," he said. She gave it to him, and this is what he wrote: "*Without you I'm unfortunate indeed, I know; how hard it is, how hard it is to live by Naniwa Bay.*"

When the governor's lady saw this, she pitied him even more. The man cut no more reeds but ran away and hid. Afterward the lady never spoke of this to anyone.

Everything is reward or retribution for the deeds of our previous lives; it is ignorance that makes a man resent his fate.

The story must have been told by the governor's lady in her old age. So the tale goes, and so it will be handed down for generations to come.

[Translated by Marian Ury]

MODERN-STYLE SONGS (*IMAYŌ*)

The fourth son of Emperor Toba, GoShirakawa (1127–1192), reigned briefly as the seventy-eighth emperor, from 1155 to 1158. After Toba's death in 1156, GoShirakawa's older brother Sutoku (1119–1164) and Fujiwara no Yorinaga (1120–1156) tried to overthrow him in an event known as the Hōgen disturbance (dramatized in the military chronicle *Hōgen monogatari*). One year after GoShirakawa's abdication to his son Nijō, the Heiji disturbance of 1159 led to the political ascendancy of the Taira clan, led by Kiyomori (1118–1181). GoShirakawa became a cloistered emperor in 1169, but under the new cloistered emperor (*insei*) system in which emperors abdicated to weak titular heirs in order to govern from behind the scenes, he continued to exert considerable influence despite Nijō's strenuous efforts to the contrary. When the then-ill Nijō abdicated in favor of his infant son Rokujō in 1165, GoShirakawa's power as a cloistered emperor was relatively unhindered.

In his youth, GoShirakawa was notorious for his absorption in artistic matters at the expense of affairs of state. As the fourth son, he had, as far as he knew, no prospect of ascending the throne and applied himself diligently to the arts, becoming accomplished in flute playing and in a number of vocal genres. He also composed waka and in 1183 commissioned Fujiwara no Shunzei to compile the *Senzai wakashū*. Fifteen of his waka appear in the imperial anthologies, including eight in the *Senzaishū* and three in the *Shinkokinshū*.

GoShirakawa's great lifelong passion, however, was *imayō*, or "modern songs." Imayō differed from waka by not being restricted to a highly formal prosody, being more informal and relaxed in content, being sung to music, and being of commoner origin. The original custodians of the imayō were marginalized

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female castes such as shrine maidens (*miko*), entertainer-prostitutes (*asobi*), and puppeteers (*kugutsu*). Although asobi did not appear in the streets of the capital until the Kamakura period, they could be found in harbor towns in the late Heian period.

GoShirakawa's autobiographical narrative in *Treasured Selections of Superb Songs* (*Ryōjin hishō*) reveals that by the mid-twelfth century, imayō had evolved into a highly refined art, which was transmitted from female master to disciple, with GoShirakawa himself becoming a devoted student of a female master. GoShirakawa turned to an aged kugutsu performer named Otomae (ca. 1086–1169) to be his teacher. This student–pupil relationship lasted for ten years, from 1159 to Otomae's death in 1169, and the relentlessness with which GoShirakawa pursued his art made imayō into something of a fashion at court. In fact, a number of male aristocrats took up the practice, and for the first time men were admitted into the imayō lineage.

TREASURED SELECTIONS OF SUPERB SONGS (*RYŌJIN HISHŌ*, CA. 1179)

Treasured Selections of Superb Songs, edited by the retired emperor GoShirakawa, is a collection of late Heian songs belonging to the genre known as imayō (literally, "modern style"), or modern songs. The songs in this collection fall into three major categories: (1) Buddhist songs, or *hōmon-uta* (songs of Buddhist scriptures); (2) songs for gods (*kami*), consisting of *shiku no kami-uta* (four-line god songs) and *niku no kami-uta* (two-line god songs); and (3) miscellaneous secular songs. The hōmon-uta are composed of four-line stanzas with 7/5 or 8/5 syllable lines; the lines of the four-line god songs tend to have more irregular lengths; and the two-line god songs often resemble the 5/7/5–7/7 syllable count of waka.

The original *Ryōjin hishō* appears to have consisted of two parts: ten volumes of songs and ten volumes of secret transmissions (*kuden*). Only fragments remain today: from the first part, 21 songs from the first volume and 545 songs from the second. A small segment of the second part—volume 1 (a history of imayō) and volume 10 (GoShirakawa's autobiography)—also survive.

The songs of Buddhist scriptures (hōmon-uta) appeared in the mid-Heian period together with the rise of Pure Land Buddhism and can be linked to two other Buddhist poetic forms: the *wasan* (Buddhist hymns) and the *shakkyō-ka* (thirty-one-syllable waka on Buddhist topics). The hōmon-uta's four-line stanzas with 7/5 or 8/5 syllable lines resemble the prosody of the wasan. The *Ryōjin hishō* contains 220 of these hōmon-uta. The wide range of buddhas and bodhisattvas—Shakyamuni, Amida, Yakushi, Kannon, Dainichi nyorai—appear in these songs, attesting to their popularity at this time. The presence of Pure Land Buddhist thought based on Genshin's *Ōjōyōshū* and related texts also is prominent. Although the imayō do not contain descriptions of hell or hungry demons, they do offer an underlying sense of sorrow with regard to this world.

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The content of the secular imayō sometimes reflects the profession of the asobi—for example, expressing their sorrow or chastising their customers. Indeed, the subject matter of the miscellaneous songs is vast: from bawdy tunes to reproaches of scorned courtesans to gamblers' songs and children's songs. The figures that appear in these songs are drawn from all quarters of late Heian commoner society: merchants, artisans, priests, nuns, courtesans, officials, and even tramps and transients. This mixture of high and low, secular and profane, righteous and irreverent, finds a close parallel to another genre of popular literature of the late Heian period: setsuwa, or anecdotes. Although the actual author of each of the songs is unknown and most were composed by professional entertainers impersonating representatives of different social types or professions, these songs remain our best, and perhaps only, glimpse into the private worlds and sentiments of late Heian commoners.

Buddhist Songs

Songs of Buddhist Scriptures

26

hotoke wa tsune ni imasedomo	Although the Buddha is ever present[612]
utsutsu naranu zo aware naru	to our sadness he takes no visible form.
hito no oto senu akatsuki ni	Away from the noise of the world, in the light of dawn,
honoka ni yume ni mietamau	I can just faintly see him in my dreams.

29

Amida hotoke no seigan zo	The vow of the Amida Buddha[613]
kaesugaesu mo tanomoshiki	is endlessly trustworthy;
hitotabi mina o tonaureba	whoever calls out His Name even once
hotoke ni naru to zo toitamau	will become a buddha, they say.

232

hotoke mo mukashi wa hito nariki	Long ago the Buddha too was a human being

612. In the "Life Span of the Thus Come One" chapter of the Lotus Sutra, Shakyamuni says: "I am always here, preaching the Law. I am always here, but through my transcendental powers I make it so that living beings in their befuddlement do not see me even when close by" (Burton Watson, trans., *Lotus Sutra* [New York: Columbia University Press, 1993], 229). Since people are caught in darkness, they can not see the Buddha clearly, even though he is ever present.

613. In the Great Sutra of Endless Life (Daimuryōjukyō), Amida makes forty-eight vows, of which the eighteenth was considered particularly important: if even those who have sinned utter the name of the Amida Buddha (nenbutsu) even once, they will become buddhas; that is, they will pass on to the Pure Land.

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warera mo tsui ni wa hotoke nari	We too will become buddhas in the end.
sanjin busshō guseru mi to	How sad not to realize in our bodies now
shirazarikeru koso aware nare	the triple-bodied Buddha nature.[614]

The Devadatta Chapter

This song refers to chapter 12 of the Lotus Sutra (Devadatta), on the ability of women to achieve salvation.

116

nyonin itsutsu no sawari ari	Women are burdened with the five obstacles.[615]
muku no jōdo wa utokeredo	They are far removed from the Pure Land,
renge shi nigori ni hirakureba	yet just as the lotus blossoms in the mud,
ryūnyo mo hotoke ni narinikeri	even the Dragon King's daughter became a buddha.[616]

Secular Songs

Miscellaneous Songs

339

ware o tanomete konu otoko	Man who took my trust then didn't call—
tsuno mitsu oitaru oni ni nare	may you turn into a demon sprouting three horns[617]

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614. The triple body (*sanjin*) is a Tendai interpretation of the Buddha as existing simultaneously as (1) a manifestation-body (*ōjin*), in which the Buddha temporally manifests itself in this world to lead others to salvation; (2) a reward-body (*hōjin*), an ideal state achieved through past practice; and (3) a dharma-body (*hosshin*), or eternal principle of the cosmos.

615. Even the Dragon Girl, a woman sunk in delusion and burdened by the five obstacles of her body, was able to achieve enlightenment upon hearing the Lotus Sutra. In the "Devadatta" (twelfth) chapter of the Lotus Sutra, the Dragon Girl is asked: "A woman is subject to the five obstacles. First, she cannot become a Brahma heavenly king. Second, she cannot become the king Shakra. Third, she cannot become a devil king. Fourth, she cannot become a wheel-turning sage king. Fifth, she cannot become a buddha. How then could a woman like you be able to attain buddhahood so quickly?" (Watson, trans., *Lotus Sutra*, 188).

616. In the "Devadatta" chapter, when the Dragon Girl presents a precious jewel to the Buddha, she is transformed in an instant into a man, performing all the duties of a bodhisattva, and attains buddhahood.

617. A histrionic exaggeration, as demons were supposed to have only two horns.

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sate hito ni utomare yo	and be despised by the people.
shimo yuki arare furu mizuta no tori to nare	May you turn into a bird in a frosty paddy, pelted by snow and hail,
sate ashi tsumetakare	and your feet freeze.
ike no ukikusa to narine kashi	May you turn into duckweed floating on a pond
to yuri kau yuri yurare arike	and sway helplessly, to and fro.[618]

342

binjo uchimireba	When I look at a beautiful woman
hitomoto kazura e mo narinabaya to zo omou	I want to turn into creeping ivy
moto yori sue made yorarebaya	twining around her from head to foot.
kiru to mo kizamu to mo	Try to cut me, try to chop me—
hanaregataki wa waga sukuse	to be bound to her is my karma.

359

asobi o sen to ya umarekemu	Are we not born to play?
tawaburesen to ya mumareken	Are we not born to jest?
asobu kodomo no koe kikeba	When I hear the voices of children at play
wagami sae koso yurugarure	even these old limbs shudder with delight.[619]

365

waga ko wa hatachi ni narinuran	My son must be twenty by now.
bakuchi shite koso arikunare	I hear he travels the land gambling
kuniguni no bakutō ni	with a gang of sharps from the provinces.
sasuga ni ko nareba nikuu nashi	He's my child after all, I can't be cross . . .

618. Many commentators speculate that the fate she hopes to inflict on her fickle suitor is precisely the one she fears will befall herself: that of an old, unwanted courtesan floating helplessly in the world.

619. Some commentators argue that this song simply represents an aged person's longing for lost youth, although most ascribe it to an *asobi* (entertainer-prostitute) past her prime, with some considering it a lament for a wasted life and others reading in it an enduring delight in the life of song and sensual pleasure.

Bahan dengan hak cipta

makaitamau na	Whatever you do, gods of Sumiyoshi and Nishinomiya,
ōji no Sumiyoshi Nishinomiya	just don't let him lose!

408

mae mae katatsuburi	Dance, snail, dance!
mawanu mono naraba	If you don't dance
muma no ko ya ushi no ko ni kuesaseten	I'll have the baby horses and baby cows
fumiwaraseten	kick you, and I'll have them squash you!
makoto ni utsukushiku mautaraba	But if you dance real nice
hana no sono made asobasen	I'll let you play in the flower patch.[620]

[Translated by Kerim Yasar]

620. Although at first glance this appears to be a song for children, if we take into account the fact that it was probably performed by an asobi, it takes on somewhat bawdier connotations.

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Chapter 3

THE KAMAKURA PERIOD

The Kamakura period began in 1183 with the establishment of the *bakufu*, or military government, in Kamakura, near present-day Tokyo, by Minamoto Yoritomo, the leader of the Minamoto (Genji) clan, which defeated the Heike (Taira) in 1185. The Genpei war between the Genji and the Heike is vividly recounted in the epic narrative *The Tales of the Heike*, part of which is translated here. After the end of the Genpei war, a struggle broke out between Yoritomo and his elder brother Yoshitsune, a prominent Minamoto military leader, who was killed in 1189 by Fujiwara Yasuhira, a general of the Fujiwara clan in Ōshū (northeast Honshū). Yoritomo, in turn, destroyed the Fujiwara forces, thus ending all major domestic armed conflict. The legends surrounding Yoshitsune can be found in *The Story of Yoshitsune* (*Gikeiki*).

After Yoritomo's death, control of the bakufu passed from the Minamoto to the Hōjō family, led by Hōjō Masako (1157–1225), the wife of Yoritomo and the mother of Minamoto Sanetomo (1192–1219), the third shogun and a noted waka poet. A key political turning point in the Kamakura period was the Jōkyū rebellion in 1221, when, in an attempt to regain direct imperial power from the military, the retired emperor GoToba (r. 1183–1198, 1180–1239) attacked the Hōjō but was soundly defeated and exiled to the small and remote island of Oki. The Jōkyū rebellion revealed the weakness of the nobility and the emperor and the growing strength of the samurai class, whose power had risen in the late Heian period. GoToba's exile to Oki is nostalgically recounted in *The Clear Mirror*

Bahan dengan hak cipta

(*Masukagami*, 1338–1376), a vernacular historical chronicle, in a section translated in this book.

The Kamakura period ended in 1333 with the defeat of Hōjō Takatoki (1303–1333) and the Hōjō clan by Emperor GoDaigo (r. 1318–1339, 1288–1339), who gained power briefly, for two years, during the Kenmu restoration (1333–1336), before being defeated by another military clan, the Ashikaga. GoDaigo retreated to Yoshino, south of the capital, and established the Southern Court and the beginning of the rival court system known as the Northern and Southern Courts period (1336–1392). The political career of Emperor GoDaigo and his failed attempt at imperial restoration is one of the focal points of the *Taiheiki* (*Chronicle of Great Peace*, 1340s–1371), a major military chronicle whose highlights are included here.

The Kamakura period marks the beginning of the so-called medieval period, a four-hundred-year span from the fall of the Heike (Taira) clan in 1185 to the battle of Sekigahara in 1600, when Tokugawa Ieyasu (1603–1605) triumphed over his rivals and unified the country under his control. Sometimes the beginning of the medieval period is pushed back as far as the beginning of the Heian period (794–1185), and sometimes the end of the medieval period is pushed forward as far as the end of the Tokugawa (Edo) period (1600–1867). Generally, however, the Kamakura period (1183–1333), the Northern and Southern Courts (Nanbokuchō) period (1336–1392), and the Muromachi period (1392–1573), when warrior society came to the fore, are considered to be the three main historical divisions of the medieval period.

The Muromachi period extended from the rule by the Ashikaga clan, based in Kyoto (in the Muromachi quarter), through the end of the Northern and Southern Courts era to the defeat of the fifteenth shogun Ashikaga Yoshiaki by Oda Nobunaga in 1573. The latter half of the Muromachi period is referred to as the Warring States (Sengoku) period, from the beginning of the Ōnin war (1467–1477) to 1573, when Oda Nobunaga destroyed the Ashikaga bakufu and unified the country. The Azuchi–Momoyama period (1573–1598) refers to the short period of time when two powerful generals, first Oda Nobunaga and then Toyotomi Hideyoshi, gained national power before eventually succumbing to Tokugawa Ieyasu at the battle of Sekigahara in 1600. The most striking cultural and literary changes occurred between the early medieval period, from the fall of the Heike clan in 1185 to the fall of the Kamakura bakufu in 1333, and the late medieval period, from the Kenmu restoration onward, with a particularly significant break after the Ōnin war that forced the aristocratic culture, centered in the capital for many centuries, to disperse to the provinces.

THE SAMURAI AND LITERATURE

One of the principal aspects of medieval society was the emergence of a warrior government and culture. As a result of the Hōgen and Heiji rebellions

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(1156–1159), the Heike (Taira), a military clan, displaced the Fujiwara clan, which had dominated the throne and the court for most of the Heian period. If the ascendance of the Heike is considered the beginning of the warrior rule, then the medieval period begins with the first year of Hōgen (1156). But the Heike elite emulated the Fujiwara regents before them, continuing the court bureaucratic system based in Kyoto, and they soon were defeated by the Genji (Minamoto), who established a military government in Kamakura, between 1183 and 1185. Minamoto Yoritomo's establishment of a bakufu in Kamakura resulted in two political centers—a court government in Kyoto and a military government in the east—thereby laying the foundation for a system of dual cultures.

During the medieval period, the bakufu in the east gradually increased its control to the point that the court government in Kyoto lost its political power. Seeing their fortunes waning, the aristocrats in Kyoto occasionally tried to restore the imperial authority of the court-centered government. But the Jōkyū rebellion in 1221 ended in failure, and the Kenmu restoration lasted for only two years. The extended struggle during the Northern and Southern Courts period, when the imperial court was split, eventually ended these attempts and dispersed the nobility, with the political power permanently shifting to the military. The result in the Muromachi period was the full emergence of a samurai-based society and culture.

As the social and economic status of the samurai rose, their cultural activities multiplied as well. During the early medieval period, the samurai were drawn to aristocratic culture and the culture of the capital, which they tried to imitate. Although there were very few samurai waka poets during the Heian period, their number steadily increased during the medieval period. The most prominent was Minamoto Sanetomo (1192–1219), the third Kamakura bakufu shogun (1203–1219), who took an interest in *Man'yōshū*-style poetry. In the late medieval period, scholars and poets of samurai origin such as Imagawa Ryōshun (1326–1414), Tō no Tsuneyori (1401–1484), and Hosokawa Yūsai (1534–1610) became prominent, and a number of renga masters had samurai origins.

The first major works of "warrior" literature during the medieval period are the military chronicles (*gunki-mono*), which were organized chronologically and focused on the lives and families of samurai. Relatively few samurai actually helped produce these chronicles, however. More often, they were the work of fallen or lesser aristocrats (often recluses) or Buddhist priests, who gave military narratives like *The Tales of the Heike* a heavily Buddhistic and aristocratic coloring. Likewise, in the latter half of the medieval period, the founder of *kōwakamai* (ballad drama), Momonoi Kōwakamaru (1393–1470), the scion of a warrior family, gave kōwakamai a samurai flavor. The other playwrights of nō drama and kōwakamai were not samurai, although samurai did form an important part of the audience.

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COMMUNAL LITERATURE

One of the main characteristics of medieval literature is that it was produced and consumed by groups rather than by individuals. This is true of military chronicles like *The Tales of the Heike* and the *Taiheiki*, *kyōgen* (comic drama), anecdotal narrative (*setsuwa*), Muromachi tales (*otogi-zoshi*), and *sekkyō-bushi* ballads. Almost all these works were composed anonymously, resulting in variant texts and multiple lines of transmission. Because this was a period of continual warfare, when human life was fraught with uncertainty, individuals tended to work in groups for both protection and survival, and the same was true of their cultural activities.

This tendency grew during the medieval period and is exemplified in the rise (particularly from the fourteenth century onward) of *renga* (linked verse), which was composed by several poets working together and which is, in many ways, the archetypal medieval literary form. Whereas Heian court literature was a product of aristocrats working in the privacy of their homes or studies, military chronicles like *The Tales of the Heike* and later fictional narratives such as the otogi-zōshi and sekkyō-bushi were recited on the road, with storytellers traveling from place to place, attracting a wider and more plebian audience. In addition, the protagonists and heroes of these narratives tended to represent the aspirations and fears of a wider stratum of society.

In the medieval period, the fundamental unit of the group was the *ie* (house), which took precedence over the individual. The continuity of the house—whether a warrior house, a waka house, or a kyōgen actor house—became paramount. This is evident in the *nanori* (often elaborate recitations of the individual's lineage) of warriors on the battlefield, which stress their genealogy and the achievements of their family or house. For poetry, scholarship, and performance arts, the preservation of the house and the transmission of learning from one generation to the next took precedence. This was the safest way to preserve learning and led to family-based traditions of secret transmissions (*denju*) and strong master–disciple relationships. The *Kokin denju*, the secret transmissions of the *Kokinshū*, passing knowledge and interpretations of the *Kokinshū* from master to disciple, is emblematic of this distinctive aspect of medieval scholarship and learning.

THE SPREAD OF BUDDHISM AND THE WAY OF THE GODS

The Genpei war and subsequent military struggles left their survivors with a deep sense of the impermanence of the world. For followers of Buddhism, the situation was so apocalyptic that it signaled for them the latter age of the Buddhist law (*mappō*). Buddhism promised worldly benefits (protection, rewards in

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this life) as well as future salvation, a sense of sustenance amid turmoil and uncertainty. Buddhism had entered Japan from China as early as the sixth century and, especially Tendai and Shingon Buddhism, had become a central institution in Heian aristocratic society, but not until the late Heian period did it begin to penetrate commoner society at large.

Innovative priests who had become disillusioned with the older, established Buddhist institutions in the capitals of Nara and Kyoto created new Buddhist schools that appealed to commoners, who often were unable to read the Buddhist scriptures. Hōnen (1133–1212) founded the Jōdo (Pure Land) sect, which had a profound influence on medieval culture, and his disciple Shinran (1173–1262) created the Shinshū (New Pure Land) sect. A generation later, Ippen (1239–1289) founded the Jishū (Time) sect. These Pure Land sects, which stressed the recitation of the name of the Amida Buddha, promised an easily attainable way to salvation, relying on the power of grace and the benevolence of the Amida Buddha. The hymns and personal writings of these Pure Land leaders, particularly those by Hōnen, are included here both because of their high literary quality and as a necessary context for understanding medieval literary texts like *The Tales of the Heike*, which are based on Kamakura Pure Land beliefs. Zen Buddhism, which was imported from China in the medieval period and welcomed by the samurai in Kamakura, stressed meditation, nondualism, and a frugal, minimalist lifestyle.

As the Buddhist sects (including Tendai, which continued to exert considerable institutional influence) rose in prominence, so too did belief in the native gods (*kami*), which laid the foundation for the institutional rise of Shinto (Way of the Gods) and its various local and national deities. Samurai leaders such as Minamoto Yoritomo, the founder of the Kamakura bakufu, worshiped and relied on both kami and buddhas. Kami were believed to bring worldly benefits and protections for the state, the community, and the clan, and they became the focus of worship at major shrines like the Ise Shrine. One result was the emerging doctrine of Japan as a "country of the gods" (*shinkoku*), evident in later Northern and Southern Courts–period texts such as Kitabatake Chikafusa's *Chronicle of the Gods* (*Jinnō shōtōki*, 1343). The rise of popular Buddhism and of cults of native gods led to a belief in *honji suijaku* (original ground–manifest traces), according to which Shinto gods are local manifestations (*suijaku*) of original buddhas (*honji*). This syncretist view had precedents in earlier periods but became prominent in the medieval period and is a frequent motif of the setsuwa of the Kamakura period and of the otogi-zōshi of the Muromachi period.

THE ARISTOCRACY AND LITERATURE

Even while their political and economic status declined, the aristocracy retained their prestige as the custodians of high culture and canonical

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literature, and the long tradition of aristocratic court literature continued to flourish in the early medieval period. Indeed, the first thirty or forty years of the Kamakura period, until the Jōkyū rebellion in 1221 when the power of the nobility was abruptly terminated, represents one of the peaks of aristocratic literature. Some of the greatest waka anthologies—beginning with the *Shinkokinshū* (*New Collection of Ancient and Modern Poems*, ca. 1205), the eighth imperial waka collection and often considered the finest of the twenty-one imperial waka anthologies—were compiled at this time. The best poetic treatises, such as Fujiwara Shunzei's *Poetic Styles from the Past* (*Korai fūteishō*, 1197) and Fujiwara Teika's *Essentials of Poetic Composition* (*Eiga taigai*, ca. 1222), were written during the early decades of the Kamakura period, an age of increased cultural production by the aristocracy. In fact, more *monogatari* (tales) were written during the early medieval period than in the Heian period, although many such works were imitative, drawing heavily on *The Tale of Genji*, which had become a model for literary and poetic composition. It was not until the Muromachi period that the monogatari received new stimulus from commoner culture, taking the form of what are now called *otogi-zōshi* (Muromachi tales).

Aristocratic literature in the medieval period was characterized by strong nostalgia for the Heian-court past and an emphasis on preserving court traditions. Indeed, literary production was the only means for many aristocrats to make a living on the basis of their heritage. The twenty-first and last imperial waka anthology, the *Shinshokukokinshū*, edited in 1439, symbolically marked the end of aristocratic literature. Not only did the aristocrats compose waka and monogatari in the medieval period, but they also turned their attention to preserving their cultural inheritance by collating, annotating, and commenting on earlier texts. Their scholarship extended from ancient texts such as the *Kojiki*, *Nihon shoki*, and *Man'yōshū* to major Heian texts like the *Kokinshū*, *The Tales of Ise*, and *The Tale of Genji*, which became the three most heavily annotated texts. The work by these aristocrats (beginning with Fujiwara Teika, who produced what became the most authoritative versions of *The Tale of Genji*) in constructing and transmitting the literary canon was eventually shared by other social groups, the priests and the samurai, who also had a strong nostalgia for the Heian classics. Two great literary figures of the late Muromachi period were Shōtetsu (1381–1459), a prolific and innovative poet who is regarded as one of the last distinguished exponents of classical waka, and the renga (linked verse) master Sōgi (1421–1502), of commoner birth, who wrote influential treatises on renga and numerous commentaries on the Heian classics. Such commentaries were motivated by the fact that Japanese po etry, specifically waka and renga, the two most important literary forms, re quired a knowledge of the diction and allusive associations of the Heian classics.

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THE PRIESTHOOD AND LITERATURE

The contribution of the Buddhist priesthood to literature was enormous, especially in light of the dominant role that Buddhism played throughout the period. The first major contribution was the *hōgo*, teachings of the Buddhist law in kana prose. Although Buddhist writings such as the *Record of Miraculous Events in Japan* (*Nihon ryōiki*) and *The Essentials of Salvation* (*Ōjōyōshū*) appeared in the mid-Heian period, they were written in Chinese. In the Kamakura period, however, the priest-intellectuals of the new Buddhist sects wrote in kana, thereby producing vernacular Buddhist literature. Buddhist leaders like Shinran and Ippen also wrote *wasan* (Buddhist hymns), which made their teachings easily accessible and available for wide dissemination. Equally important was Zen Buddhism, introduced to Japan by Dōgen (1200–1253) and others. One product of Zen culture was the literature of the Five Mountains (*Gozan bungaku*), writings in Chinese by Zen priests from the late thirteenth to the sixteenth century, with which Ikkyū (1394–1481), whose poetry is included here, was associated. Zen Buddhism also had a profound impact on nō drama, as is evident in works such as *Stupa Komachi* (*Sotoba Komachi*).

Equally important were the collections of setsuwa edited by Buddhist priests and used for preaching to commoners. Setsuwa were collected from as early as the Nara period, beginning with the *Nihon ryōiki*, and appeared in the late Heian period in the massive *Collection of Tales of Times Now Past* (*Konjaku monogatari shū*), but it was in the Kamakura period that most of the setsuwa collections were edited and produced. At that time a new type of setsuwa emerged: the *engi-mono* (tales of origins), which describe the origins and miraculous benefits of the god or buddha worshiped by a specific temple or shrine complex. Engi-mono were produced by the priests or shrine officials at the religious site, using historical documents and popular legend to record, embellish, or reinvent the history of the temple or shrine and to advertise the powers of the enshrined deity. Almost all of them were preserved as illustrated scrolls (*emakimono*). A good example is "The Avatars of Kumano" in the *Shintōshū*, about the origin of the gods of the Kumano Shrine. Similar kinds of illustrated scrolls formed the basis for the later Muromachi otogi-zōshi. A *sekkyō* (sermon-ballad) tradition emerged in which priests narrated or chanted Buddhist teachings or engi-mono with a musical accompaniment. In the late medieval period this tradition was consolidated as *sekkyō-bushi* (ballads sung to the beat of the *sasara*), performed by commoner storytellers. This genre became the basis of *sekkyō jōruri* (ballads sung to shamisen accompaniment), a medium for narrating double suicides and revenge tales that eventually evolved into *jōruri* (puppet theater) in the Tokugawa period. Buddhist priest-storytellers (*monogatari sō*) also became specialists in narrating military chronicles like the *Taiheiki* (*Chronicle of Great Peace*).

Buddhist priests were also prominent composers of waka and renga. In fact, there is probably no genre in the medieval period that was not related to the

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Buddhist clergy. One consequence is that Buddhist thought permeates medieval literature: warrior tales, historical chronicles, setsuwa, essays (*zuihitsu*), nō drama, otogi-zōshi, and sekkyō-bushi. Even the treatises on waka, renga, and nō drama are permeated by Buddhist perspectives. In sum, all forms of cultural production in the medieval period were inseparable from Buddhist concepts and worldviews. This is why the notion that literature amounts to nothing more than *kyōgen kigo* (wild words and decorative phrases) came to the fore. On the one hand, in the Buddhist context, literature and its production were thought to be illusory and even an impediment to salvation, encouraging worldly attachments. On the other hand, it could, as argued in the selections from the *Collection of Sand and Pebbles* (*Shasekishū*, 1279–1283), be rationalized by Buddhist writers as an expedient means (*hōben*) of teaching the Buddhist law and leading readers (or listeners) to insight and, ultimately, enlightenment.

Chronology with Key Dates and Figures

Kamakura period	1183–1333
Fall of the Heike	1185
Saigyō	1118–1190
Kamo no Chōmei	1153?–1216
Fujiwara Teika	1162–1241
Jōkyū rebellion	1221
Dōgen	1200–1253
Kenmu restoration	1333–1336
Northern and Southern Courts (Nanbokuchō) period	1336–1392
Kenkō	ca. 1283–ca. 1352
Nijō Yoshimoto	1320–1388
Kan'ami	1333–1384
Taiheiki	ca. 1370
Muromachi period	1392–1573
Zeami	1363?–1443?
Ikkyū	1394–1481
Ōnin war	1467–1477
Warring States (Sengoku) period	1467–1573
Sōgi	1421–1502
Azuchi–Momoyama period	1573–1598
Battle of Sekigahara	1600

SAIGYŌ

Satō Norikiyo, now known as Saigyō (1118–1190), was the son of a wealthy family of hereditary warrior aristocrats. At the age of fifteen, he entered the service of the powerful Tokudaiji family, and later he served the retired emperor Toba as

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one of the Northern Guard (Hokumen no bushi), a select group of military bodyguards. Members of the Northern Guard also served as cultural companions to the retired emperor, exhibiting skill in poetry, music, *kemari*,[1] and other aristocratic pastimes. For reasons still being debated, in 1140, at the age of twenty-three, Saigyō suddenly abandoned his post and his family to become a Buddhist monk. For the next fifty years, Saigyō alternately lived in seclusion, traveled about the country, spent time in the capital, and carried out various Buddhist activities. Throughout his tonsured life, Saigyō continued to compose poetry, increasing his fame. The pinnacle of Saigyō's poetic influence came fifteen years after his death, when ninety-four of his poems (more than those of any other poet) were included in the imperially sponsored *Shinkokinshū* (*New Collection of Ancient and Modern Poems*, ca. 1205).

Although reliable historical documents concerning Saigyō's life are scarce, the autobiographical nature of many of his poems has fed the imagination of readers for centuries, giving rise to a vast body of semilegendary material. "The Woman of Pleasure at Eguchi," from the *Tales of Renunciation* (*Senjūshō*), is a good example of how Saigyō's poems became the object of legends. It now is nearly impossible to separate the legend Saigyō from the actual poet and his poems. Saigyō spent many years in and around the capital and nearly thirty years in relative seclusion near Mount Kōya, the headquarters of the Shingon Buddhist establishment. He is best known as a travel poet, making the long and arduous trip to Michinoku (northeastern Honshū) twice—once shortly after becoming a monk and again when he was around sixty-nine years of age. He also traveled to Shikoku, Kumano, and Ise, where he spent the duration of the Genpei (Heike/Genji) war (1180–1186). After the fighting ended, Saigyō returned to the capital and then to Kawachi (near present-day Osaka), where he lived out his remaining years, dying on the sixteenth day of the Second Month in 1190.

Although Saigyō composed poetry covering the entire range of traditional waka topics, his most famous poems are on travel, reclusion, cherry blossoms, and the moon. Travel was an established category in both waka composition and the imperially sponsored anthologies. Later interpreters and scholars have perceived a special sense of immediateness in Saigyō's travel poetry. Many waka poets never saw the poetic sites they described in their poems, relying instead on established associations of poetic place-names. Even though Saigyō is known for his travels, he also composed many poems on famous places without visiting them.

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1. Kemari is the aristocratic game of hacky-sack, or sepia. Saigyō is known to have been a master kemari player.

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Similarly, it is not entirely clear just how secluded from the world Saigyō was. He likely lived alone in the capital or far away in Kōya or Ise, but he probably was never in total seclusion. Rather, he lived near and associated with others who had abandoned the world. Furthermore, Saigyō nourished ties with the poetic establishment; he maintained relationships with high-ranking aristocrats and imperial personages from the time of his service as a samurai; and he actively participated in poetic and Buddhistic activities in and around the capital as well as at Kōya and Ise.

SELECTED POEMS

Saigyō is noted for his poetry on cherry blossoms, being especially fond of the blossoms in the mountainous region of Yoshino, not far from Mount Kōya. Saigyō's cherry blossom poems often express a sense of attachment to the blossoms and have been interpreted as self-remonstrative in the Buddhist sense. Saigyō's moon poems also carry Buddhist overtones, for in both Buddhist sutras and waka, the moon is the symbol of enlightenment. Many of Saigyō's moon poems also, however, retain the traditional association of love or longing. Some of his best moon poems contain both associations, creating a tension between the two.

Saigyō's poetry is marked by unadorned self-expression, seeming simplicity of diction, self-reflection, and the interweaving of nature imagery with Buddhist motifs and ideals. These traits have made his poems among the most popular and influential in the poetic canon.

SANKASHŪ, MISCELLANEOUS, NO. 723

At the time that I decided to abandon the world, some people at Higashiyama composed on the topic "expressing one's feelings on mist."

sora ni naru	The empty sky
kokoro wa haru no	of my heart
kasumi ni te	enshrouded in spring mist
yo ni araji to mo	rises to thoughts of
omoi tatsu kana	leaving the world behind.[2]

2. This poem was composed seven months before Saigyō took vows. The opening phrase (*sora ni naru kokoro*) literally means "my heart that is the sky" or "my heart that is empty," which suggests that the poet's heart is becoming the sky, spreading infinitely until it becomes clear and empty. The verb *tatsu* means both for a person "to resolve" (on leaving the world) and for the spring mist "to rise." The combined image suggests that Saigyō wishes to rise above the world, where he can freely gaze on the clear and empty sky of his own heart.

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SHINKOKINSHŪ, LOVE, NO. 1267; *SANKASHŪ*, MISCELLANEOUS, NO. 727

When I was staying somewhere far away, I sent the following to someone in the capital around the time of the moon.

tsuki nomi ya	Only the moon
uwa no sora naru	in the sky above
katami ni te	a vacant reminder,
omoi mo ideba	should you think of me,
kokoro kayowamu	perhaps it will link your heart to mine.[3]

SHINKOKINSHŪ, MISCELLANEOUS, NO. 1535

sutsu to naraba	If I've forsaken
ukiyo o itou	the world of sorrows
shirushi aramu	there must be proof I despise it—
ware ni wa kumore	shroud yourself for me,
aki no yo no tsuki	autumn night moon.[4]

SHINKOKINSHŪ, MISCELLANEOUS, NO. 1611; *SANKASHŪ*, MISCELLANEOUS, NO. 728

When I abandoned the world and was on my way to Ise, I composed this at Suzuka-yama (Bell Deer Mountain).

Suzuka-yama	Suzuka Mountain,
ukiyo o yoso ni	I've tossed aside the world of sorrows
furisutete	as a stranger to myself,
ika ni nariyuku	so what note will I now sound,
waga mi naruran	what will become of me?[5]

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3. "The time of the moon" is autumn. Although Saigyō was a monk, it was not unusual for Buddhist priests to compose love poetry, based on experience or imagination. This poem is thought to have been sent to someone in the capital, most likely Saigyō's wife. *Uwa no sora* (sky above) can also mean "vacant," "restless," or "distracted." The poem implies that the poet is always thinking of the former loved one, although that loved one has likely forgotten the poet.

4. Like the moon of the previous poem, this moon is associated with worldly thoughts. As one who has forsaken the world, Saigyō must have some proof that he is free of worldly emotions. This proof is in Saigyō's not thinking of the world, or of love, when he looks at the moon. This is not possible, Saigyō implies, if the moon is clear and beautiful.

5. Poems about Suzuka (Bell Deer) Mountain use words related to bells. *Furisutete* means "to toss away" but also implies ringing a bell (*furu*). *Naru* and *nari* imply the sound of a bell being rung, as well as "becoming." This poem calls on a long history of poetry by imperial princesses chosen to become the high priestess of the Ise shrines. Suzuka Mountain was on the route to the Ise shrines as well as being a checkpoint along the Eastern Sea Road (Tōkaidō), and a popular place to compose a poem expressing feelings concerning the journey ahead. The poet

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SANKASHŪ, SPRING, NO. 66

Yoshino yama	Since the day
kozue no hana o	I saw the treetop blossoms
mishi hi yori	in Yoshino's mountains
kokoro wa mi ni mo	my heart has not stayed
sowazu nari ni ki	with my body at all.[6]

SHINKOKINSHŪ, MISCELLANEOUS, NO. 617

Yoshino yama	Mount Yoshino,
yagate ideji to	I'd like to stay
omou mi o	and never leave,
hana chirinaba to	though some are surely waiting, thinking
hito ya matsuran	"once the blossoms have fallen . . ."[7]

SANKASHŪ, SPRING, NO. 76

hana ni somu	Why should my heart
kokoro no ikade	remain stained
nokorikemu	by blossoms,
sutehateteki to	when I thought
omou waga mi ni	I had tossed all that away?[8]

SANKASHŪ, SPRING, NO. 87

When I thought I'd like some peace and quiet, people came to see the cherry blossoms.

hanami ni to	Wanting to see the blossoms
muretsutsu hito no	people come in droves

---

seems concerned about his future now that he has broken all ties with the world. Recent commentators, however, have pointed out that often bells were rung when praying for the fulfillment of a wish.

6. The spirit was thought to wander away from the body when deeply disturbed or fraught with jealousy. Here Saigyō's spirit has left his body in ecstatic excitement at seeing the cherry blossoms of Mount Yoshino, famous for its mountain cherries. The poem suggests that Saigyō is disappointed that he cannot control his thoughts and desires, but Yoshino is also known as a sacred space and a site of religious training, where spiritual feats are not uncommon.

7. The poet has gone to Mount Yoshino to see the cherry blossoms. However, since Mount Yoshino is traditionally a place of religious retreat as well, perhaps he really wants to escape the world altogether. But someone waits, thinking that he will simply return to the capital once the blossoms fall. He is caught between his desire to escape the world and his thoughts for the people waiting for him at home.

8. This poem, perhaps composed shortly after Saigyō took Buddhist vows, expresses his consternation at his remaining attachments. The phrase "stained by blossoms" (*hana ni somu*), which has also been interpreted as referring to a romantic or worldly attachment, implies a deep attachment to the cherry blossoms. This internal conflict is a hallmark of Saigyō's style.

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kuru nomi zo	to visit—this alone
atara sakura no	regrettably
toga ni wa arikeru	is the cherry tree's fault.[9]

SANKASHŪ, SPRING, NO. 139

On the topic "cherry blossoms scattering in a dream," composed with others at the residence of the former Kamo Priestess.

harukaze no	When I dream
hana o chirasu to	of spring wind
miru yume wa	scattering cherry blossoms
samete mo mune no	my heart stirs
sawagu narikeri	even after waking.[10]

SHINKOKINSHŪ, MISCELLANEOUS, NO. 1471

yo no naka o	When I think of
omoeba nabete	this world
chiru hana no	all is scattering blossoms,
waga mi o satemo	so where else
izuchi kamo semu	might I choose to be?[11]

SHINKOKINSHŪ, MISCELLANEOUS, NO. 1846; *SANKASHŪ*, SPRING, NO. 77

negawaku wa	My wish is
hana no shita nite	to die in spring

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9. This is one of Saigyō's most famous poems, primarily because it forms the basis of *Saigyō zakura* (*Saigyō and the Cherry Tree*), one of the most beloved nō plays. In the play, the spirit of the cherry tree appears to rebuke Saigyō for blaming the blossoms for his discomfort. But Saigyō is stating that the *only* fault to be found in a cherry tree is that it is so beautiful that crowds of people come to see it and destroy the serenity of a monk in retreat.

10. The Kamo Priestess was an imperial princess chosen to serve as the high priestess of the Kamo Shrine in the capital. The poem alludes to a late spring poem by Ki no Tsurayuki, *Kokinshū*, no. 117: "That night when I lodged and slept in the spring foothills, the blossoms scattered even in my dreams." Saigyō's poem describes the state of the poet after waking from that dream. The verb "to stir" (*sawagu*) is a word associated in the poetic tradition with "wind," but it also implies a racing heart.

11. Saigyō draws a direct parallel between the scattering blossoms and himself (*waga mi*). If we take *waga mi* to mean the poet's body specifically, the poem can be read as foreseeing death. Most commentators see a more general expression of uncertainty: if the whole world is as impermanent as scattering blossoms, then he cannot escape that uncertainty.

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haru shinan	under the cherry blossoms
sono kisaragi no	on that day in the Second Month
mochizuki no koro	when the moon is full.[12]

SANKASHŪ, SPRING, NO. 78

hotoke ni wa	Offer up
sakura no hana o	cherry blossoms
tatematsure	to the deceased,
waga nochi no yo o	if anyone wishes to mourn me
hito toburawaba	after I'm gone.[13]

SHINKOKINSHŪ, AUTUMN 1, NO. 362; *SANKASHŪ*, AUTUMN, NO. 470

Composed along the way to somewhere in autumn.

kokoro naki	Even one
mi ni mo aware wa	with no heart could not help
shirarekeri	but know pathos:
shigi tatsu sawa no	a snipe takes flight in a marsh
aki no yūgure	this autumn evening.[14]

12. "That day in the Second Month" refers to the fifteenth day of the Second Month in the lunar calendar, the day that Shakyamuni, the historical Buddha, is said to have died. Saigyō here combines his three central devotions—cherry blossoms, the moon, and the Buddha—in one poem. Saigyō actually died on the sixteenth day of the Second Month. At least four other monks of the medieval period are said to have successfully entered nirvana on the same day as the Buddha, and it was not unusual for many to try.

13. Although cherry blossoms are not usually chosen as offerings to the dead, Saigyō here insists on his favorite flower. Saigyō's request has been seen as further evidence of his lingering attachment to the world, but the cherry blossoms can also be associated with the death of Siddhartha (the historical Buddha) beneath the sala blossoms.

14. This poem is one of the "three evening poems" (*sanseki no uta*) of the *Shinkokinshū*. The other two poems are by Jakuren and Teika. Autumn evenings (*aki no yūgure*) are associated with loneliness in classical poetry. The sound of the wings of the snipe(s) fading into the approaching darkness deepens the sense of loneliness in the autumn dusk. According to the headnote, Saigyō composed this poem while traveling, which also connotes loneliness. The phrase *kokoro naki mi* (body/self without heart/spirit) has basically two interpretations: one who has taken Buddhist vows and has presumably transcended joy and sadness, or one who has no aesthetic or poetic sensibility and does not understand the pathos (*aware*) of things. Either way, this scene would move even such a person. More specifically, the speaker has been caused to know (*shirarekeri*) the pathos of things through this scene.

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SHINKOKINSHŪ, WINTER, NO. 625

Tsu no kuni no	Was spring at Naniwa
Naniwa no haru wa	in Tsu Province
yume nare ya	a dream?
ashi no kareha ni	Wind blows
kaze wataru nari	over the withered reeds' leaves.[15]

SHINKOKINSHŪ, MISCELLANEOUS, NO. 1676

furuhata no	From a tree
soba no tatsu ki ni	standing on a cliff
iru hato no	by an old field
tomo yobu koe no	the voice of a dove calling a friend
sugoki yūgure	in the eerie twilight.[16]

SANKASHŪ, AUTUMN, NO. 414

With a certain purpose in mind, I went to Ichinomiya in Aki. Along the way, at a place called Takatomi Bay, I was stopped for a while by the wind. Upon seeing moonlight filtering through a rush-thatched hut, I composed the following:

nami no oto o	My heart troubled
kokoro ni kakete	by the sound of the waves,
akasu kana	I spend the night,
toma moru tsuki no	my only friend the moon's light
kage o tomo ni te	winnowing through this hut.[17]

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15. This poem is an allusive variation on Nōin's famous poem on Naniwa, or Osaka Bay, in the *Goshūishū*, vol. 1, Spring 1, no. 43: "To someone with a heart I'd like to show this scene of spring at Naniwa in the province of Tsu." Saigyō rarely alluded directly to earlier poems, but he was fond of Nōin's poetry. Here the allusion establishes a seasonal contrast between spring at Naniwa and the barrenness of winter. The implied sound of the wind through the reeds, which always are associated with Naniwa, adds to the sense of loneliness. Fujiwara no Shunzei described this poem as an example of *yūgen* (mystery and depth) style.

16. *Soba* is a slope, bluff, or precipice, suggesting that this field is in the hills or mountains. The combination of images—the sound of the dove, the abandoned fields, evening, and so forth—suggests autumn. The dove crying to a friend is an implicit metaphor for the poet, implying both loneliness and love. The use of the word *sugoki*, suggesting fright, cold, and isolation, is highly unusual in waka but common in prose.

17. Aki is part of present-day Hiroshima Prefecture. Ichinomiya is the Itsukushima Shrine on Miyajima Island. The subject of moonlight filtering through the roof or eaves of a thatched hut was a favorite of Saigyō's. A night in a hut on a beach almost always implies wind, waves, and the moon. Saigyō was known for making friends out of inanimate objects like the moon and pine trees.

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SHINKOKINSHŪ, AUTUMN 1, NO. 472

kirigirisu	Cricket,
yosamu ni aki no	as the autumn night cold
naru mama ni	wears on,
yowaru ka koe no	are you weakening?
tōzakariyuku	Your voice grows more distant.[18]

SHINKOKINSHŪ, WINTER, NO. 627

sabishisa ni	I wish there were another here
taetaru hito no	who could bear
mata mo are na	this loneliness;
iori narabemu	we'd build our huts side by side
fuyu no yamazato	in this wintry mountain village.[19]

SHINKOKINSHŪ, SUMMER, NO. 262

michinobe ni	In the shade
shimizu nagaruru	of a roadside willow
yanagi kage	near a clear flowing stream
shibashi tote koso	I stopped,
tachidomaritsure	for just a while, I thought.[20]

KIKIGAKISHŪ, NO. 165

When I was living in Saga, I and others wrote poems in a light vein.

unaiko ga	The sound of children
susami ni narasu	playfully blowing
mugibue no	straw whistles

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18. The voice of an insect, especially a gradually weakening voice, is commonly used to suggest the loneliness of autumn and the gradual loss of life. Saigyō, however, is engaging the cricket directly in a conversational mode. The cricket may be a cricket, a friend of the poet, or the poet himself.

19. The poet wishes for a friend who, like himself, can bear the loneliness. Saigyō does not wish to escape the loneliness but, rather, to share it with another. Implicitly the thatched hut of a recluse is a place for reflection, meditation, and composition.

20. Much of the effect of this poem derives from the repetition of the *i* sound in *michinobe ni shimizu* and in *shibashi* and from the series of *a* sounds in *nagaruru yanagi kage*. The *koso . . . tsure* construction leaves out the logical conclusion, "but I lingered much longer than planned." Later interpreters read this as a travel poem, with willow trees becoming part of the legend (as in the nō play *Yugyō yanagi* and Matsuo Bashō's *Oku no hosomichi*). Both the shade of the willow and the flowing stream are cool images appropriate to summer.

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koe ni odoroku	wakes me from my
natsu no hirubushi	summer afternoon nap.[21]

SHINKOKINSHŪ, TRAVEL, NO. 987

Composed when going to the eastern provinces.

toshi takete	Did I ever imagine
mata koyubeshi to	I would make this pass again
omoiki ya	in my old age?
inochi narikeri	Such is life!
Sayononaka yama	Sayononaka Mountain.[22]

SHINKOKINSHŪ, MISCELLANEOUS, NO. 1613

On Mount Fuji, composed when carrying out religious practices in the eastern provinces.

kaze ni nabiku	Trailing in the wind,
Fuji no keburi no	Fuji's smoke
sora ni kiete	fades into the sky
yukue mo shiranu	destination unknown,
waga omoi kana	just like my own thoughts![23]

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21. This is the first of a series of thirteen poems written by Saigyō late in life. It is thought that they were composed shortly after his second trip to Michinoku, around 1188. They are unusually playful and colloquial in tone and are thus called *tawabure uta* (playful poems). Some commentators believe, however, that these play poems contain deeper Buddhist connotations and that this poem in particular describes a moment of awakening analogous to enlightenment.

22. Sayononaka Mountain, in present-day Shizuoka Prefecture, was a difficult pass along the Eastern Sea Road. This poem was composed on Saigyō's second trip to Michinoku and refers to his amazement at being able to cross Sayononaka some forty years after his first trip. The key to the poem lies in the fourth line, translated here as "Such is life!" *Inochi* refers to the poet's life or lifespan, but it can also mean "fate" or "destiny." Long life is remarkable when one assumes that life is fleeting and insubstantial.

23. *Nabiku* (trailing), *keburi* (smoke), *yukue mo shiranu* (destination unknown), and *omoi* (thoughts/longing) all are words traditionally used in love poems. The *hi* of *omo(h)i* also suggests fire (*hi*). Mount Fuji was long a symbol of smoldering passion. Hence, this poem is placed in the love section of *Saigyō shōninshū*, but it is placed in the miscellany category of the *Shinkokinshū*, and most commentators go out of their way to deemphasize the love imagery. According to Saigyō's friend Jien, Saigyō himself considered this perhaps his best poem (*jisanka*), and it has received critical and popular acclaim. The nexus of meaning is thought to be in the word *omohi*. In a traditional love poem, these "thoughts" would imply a lover or longing. The first half of the poem, while suggesting love imagery, can also be interpreted as funerary, with the image of smoke fading away suggesting the smoke of a funeral pyre. The death imagery suggests that it is not only his thoughts but also himself that is trailing toward extinction, or nirvana. "Destination unknown" is a pivot phrase that modifies both the smoke and the poet's thoughts.

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SHINKOKINSHŪ, MISCELLANEOUS, NO. 1536

fuke ni keru	As I ponder
waga yo no kage o	my waning shadow
omou ma ni	of life far gone,
haruka ni tsuki no	in the distance
katabuki ni keri	the moon sets.[24]

SHINKOKINSHŪ, BUDDHIST POEMS, NO. 1978

On looking at one's heart.

yami harete	Darkness dispels,
kokoro no sora ni	and the moon shining clear
sumu tsuki wa	in my heart's sky
nishi no yamabe ya	now seems to near
chikaku naruramu	the western hills.[25]

[Introduction and translations by Jack Stoneman]

FUJIWARA NO SHUNZEI

Fujiwara no Shunzei (1114–1204), also known by the alternative reading of Fujiwara no Toshinari, was the third son of Toshitada, a provisional junior counselor (*gon-chūnagon*) who died when Shunzei was ten years old. His mother was the daughter of Atsuie, the governor of Iyo. In his youth, Shunzei was the governor of Mimasaka, Kaga, and other provinces, but in his middle years, his bureaucratic career stalled, eventually leading to his decision to take vows at the age of sixty-three and assume the Buddhist name of Shakua. After taking vows, he was supported by Kujō Kanezane, of the regental family, and concentrated on reviving his family fortunes through poetry.

According to an episode recounted in Kamo no Chōmei's *Mumyōshō*, when

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24. *Fuke ni keru* is generally used to mean night or autumn "growing deep." It can also mean "growing old." Saigyō puns on the word *yo*, which can mean "one's life" as well as "night." *Kage* can mean "shadow" or "one's physical form" (or face). If we take *yo* to be one's lifetime, then *kage* would be the accumulation of one's life experiences. If we take *ma* to be a moment, this becomes a sudden awakening to the reality of old age. If we take *ma* to be a period of time, we can imagine the poet pondering his long life throughout the night, only to notice that in the meantime the moon has begun to set.

25. The topic of this poem is *kanjin* (looking at one's heart)—that is, meditation on the heart and self-realization. Often in Buddhist discourse, the heart is compared to a mirror that, when clear and unspotted, is able to reflect the full bright moon, a symbol of the Buddha and the Buddhist law. The darkness is that of attachment and sin. The "western hills" symbolize the Western Paradise of Amida Buddha. This poem was chosen as the final entry in the *Shinkokinshū*, occupying a privileged position.

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asked about his "Seeing an Image of Cherry Blossoms" (Omokage ni hana no sugata) poem and his "As Evening Approaches" (Yū sareba nobe) poem, Shunzei noted that the first could not be compared with the second. The first embodied the refined and elegant aesthetics of poetry up through the *Shikashū* (1151–1154), the sixth imperial waka anthology. But the second poem drew on a much earlier classical text (*The Tales of Ise*), creating a double image of both the present and a fictional past. This image, in turn, created a new kind of poetry and poetic world that was manifested in the *Senzaishū* (1183), the seventh imperial anthology of waka, which includes this poem, and later in the *Shinkokinshū* (1205), the eighth imperial anthology. For Shunzei, the essence of poetry was not the rhetoric or the novelty of the conception but the hidden depths (*yūgen*) that derived from rhythm and sound. Like many of the poets in this period, Shunzei wrote on fixed topics for public occasions, which meant composing on the established associations of the topic, but at the same time he tried to revive the subjectivity (emotional position and personal perspective) of the poet.

In the middle of a career that spanned most of the twelfth century, Shunzei came into his own in his fifties as a strong competitor of Fujiwara no Kiyosuke (1104–1177), head of the Rokujō family, which was highly conservative and stressed the study of the ancient period. In 1188, at the age of seventy-five, Shunzei was commissioned to serve as the sole compiler of the *Senzaishū*, an event that consolidated his eminence as leader of the world of court poetry and enabled him to establish his Mikohidari house as the dominant poetry family in the service of the imperial household, against any remaining competition from the Rokujō family. Shunzei did his most influential work as a teacher and scholar in his last ten years, serving as a judge for the noted Poetry Match in Six Hundred Rounds (Roppyakuban uta-awase) and writing *Poetic Styles from the Past* (*Korai fūteishō*, 1197), which explains his mature views of poetry. Among his many disciples were several major *Shinkokinshū* poets, including Priest Jakuren, Princess Shokushi, Fujiwara no Ietaka, his eponymous adopted daughter (known only as Daughter of Shunzei), and his son Fujiwara no Teika. Seventy-two of his poems were included in the *Shinkokinshū*.

SELECTED POEMS

SHINCHOKUSENSHŪ, SPRING 1, NO. 57

Composed when the retired emperor Sutoku made a royal visit to Konoe Palace and announced the topic of "traveling afar to see mountain flowers."

omokage ni	Seeing an
hana no sugata o	image of cherry blossoms
sakidatete	ahead of me

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ikue koekinu	I crossed one mountain after another—
mine no shirakumo	white clouds on the peaks.[26]

SHINKOKINSHŪ, SPRING 2, NO. 114

mata ya min	Will I ever again
Katano no mino no	seek cherry blossoms
sakuragari	in the royal fields of Katano?
hana no yuki chiru	Flowers of falling snow,
haru no akebono	early dawn in spring.[27]

SHINKOKINSHŪ, SUMMER, NO. 201

mukashi omou	Mountain cuckoo,
kusa no iori no	add no tears to the rain
yo no ame ni	that falls on this hut of grass
namida na soe so	where I long tonight
yamahototogisu	for the past.[28]

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26. The poet, who travels over one mountain after another, keeps "seeing" the cherry blossoms in his mind's eye and "seeing" them ahead in the form of the white clouds on the peak. The weariness of a journey has apparently caused him almost to hallucinate. If the white clouds are peaks that he has already crossed, they suggest the disappointment of passing peaks that were snow-capped rather than covered with cherry blossoms. The poem has a nominal ending, a characteristic of poetry of this period.

27. The verse breaks after the first and third measures and ends in a nominal, creating a fragmentary poem. The poem takes up the theme of age and impermanence, implying that the poet will not have the opportunity to enjoy this beauty again. The line "early dawn in spring" (*haru no akebono*) comes from the opening of Sei Shōnagon's *Pillow Book*, implying the most beautiful aspect of spring. The second and third measures recall *The Tales of Ise*, sec. 82, when Prince Koretaka goes to Katano, to the Nagisa-no-in, a place noted for cherry blossoms, together with his friends, including Narihira, to enjoy the cherry blossoms, drink wine, and compose poems, one of which was "It is because they fall soon that the cherry blossoms are so admired. What can stay long in this fleeting world?" (pp. 198–200). Through the allusion, Shunzei places himself in the position of Narihira and his companions, who wonder whether they will ever again be with Prince Koretaka, who subsequently encountered misfortune. Shunzei composed the poem at a poetry party hosted by the aristocrat and poet Fujiwara no Yoshitsune in 1195, when Shunzei was eighty-two years old.

28. Shunzei composed this on the topic "Cuckoo" (*hototogisu*) for a hundred-poem sequence (*hyakushu*) sponsored by Fujiwara no Kanezane, minister of the right, in 1178. In the waka tradition, the mountain cuckoo lives in the hills and visits the capital in the Fifth Month, implying that the grass hut is in the hills and that the rains are the long, melancholy rains of summer. The mood of unbearable loneliness is further developed by an allusion to a famous verse in the *Wakan rōeishū* (no. 555), in which Bo Juyi compares his present situation, as an official who has retired to Mount Lu, with that of his three friends, who still are flourishing in government: "While flowers bloom at the Orchid Bureau, you bask beneath brocade curtains. On Mount Lu a night of rain here in my thatched hut." The lines ". . . I long tonight for the past" refer to Bo Juyi's thoughts of a happier time and also to the author's memory of his days at the imperial court. Two years earlier, in 1176, Shunzei, after falling seriously ill, had taken holy vows and assumed the Buddhist name of Shakua.

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SENZAISHŪ, AUTUMN 1, NO. 250

yū sareba	As evening approaches
nobe no akikaze	the autumn wind over the field
mi ni shimite	pierces my body—
uzura naku nari	a quail cries
Fukakusa no sato	in the deep grass of Fukakusa.[29]

SHINKOKINSHŪ, LOVE 2, NO. 1107

Sent to a woman on a rainy day.

omoiamari	When I gaze off
sonata no sora o	toward your skies,
nagamureba	unable to bear the longing,
kasumi o wakete	the spring rain falls,
harusame zo furu	parting the mist.[30]

SENZAISHŪ, MISCELLANEOUS, NO. 1148

While composing poems for a one-hundred-poem collection on personal grievances, he composed the following on the topic "deer":

yo no naka yo	Ah, this world!
michi koso nakare	No way beyond:
omoiiru	even entering deep hills
yama no oku ni mo	where my thoughts would dwell,
shika zo naku naru	I hear the deer crying . . . [31]

29. Fukakusa (literally, "deep grass") is the name of a secluded village to the south of Kyoto. In a footnote to this poem in the *Jichin oshō jika-awase* (1190–1199), Shunzei notes that the quail refers to the woman in Fukakusa village in *The Tales of Ise*, sec. 123, in which the man is moved by the woman's poem and decides to remain (pp. 202–203). The allusion suggests that the speaker in Shunzei's poem is the woman who has grown weary of waiting for her lover, that the cry of the quail is that of the abandoned woman, and that the grass has grown deep as a result of the man's neglect. The autumn wind penetrates the body not only of the speaker but of the abandoned woman.

30. The headnote to this poem in *Chōshū eisō*, Shunzei's personal poetry collection, notes: "During the spring, sent to the residence of a woman for whom I longed." Shunzei apparently cannot visit his love. He can only look in her direction, but the view is blocked by the misty spring rain. The landscape becomes a projection of the apparent social barrier and a metaphor for the speaker's melancholy.

31. This poem is a lament (*jukkai*) about one's own misfortune. In 1140 or 1141, when Shunzei was still young, around twenty-six or twenty-seven, he had difficulty rising in the bureaucracy.

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POETIC STYLES FROM THE PAST (*KORAI FŪTEISHŌ*, 1197)

Poetic Styles from the Past was written by Shunzei toward the end of his long career. It is generally assumed that he offered the text to Princess Shokushi (also called Shikishi) in 1197. The first volume begins with a general introduction that is followed by a history of waka from the ancient period to the *Senzaishū* (1187). The second volume begins with another general statement on the essence of waka that is followed by poetry chosen from the seven imperial anthologies starting with the *Kokinshū* through the *Senzaishū*.[32]

When Shunzei speaks here of the "heart" (*kokoro*) of a poet, he is referring to the heart of many poetic predecessors, who composed with a communal heart/mind (*kokoro*). According to Shunzei, to enter into the path of poetry is to participate in this communal mind, which he explains by drawing on *Calm and Contemplation* (*Mohe zhiguan*; J. *Maka shikan*), a major treatise by the Chinese Buddhist thinker Zhiyi (Chigi, 538–597). In turn, *Calm and Contemplation* explains how the Buddha transmitted the dharma, the Buddhist law, from individual to individual. Shunzei then describes how poetry—and implicitly the communal memory—was passed down from generation to generation. Instead of listing famous poets, Shunzei recounts the major poetic anthologies: the *Man'yōshū*, *Kokinshū*, *Gosenshū*, and *Shūishū*. The *Kana* Preface to the *Kokinshū* notes that poetry comes from the seed of the heart. Shunzei, by contrast, states that poetry comes from the poetic heart that exists in the "original heart" (*moto no kokoro*), and he implies that aesthetic sensibility is created, preserved by, and passed on through poetry. Poetry thus actively creates the world of sensibility.

Shunzei draws on Tendai thought for two purposes: to explain the notion of the transmission of poetry and to explain that the ways of poetry and of the Buddhist law are one and the same. Both points work against the doctrine that poetry is *kyōgen kigo* (wild words and decorative phrases), arguing that poetry shares many of the characteristics of Buddhism: the transmission of the holy truth (through the poetic anthologies), a reverence for the way (of poetry), the difficulty of explaining the deeper meaning (of the poem), the importance of meditation (of calm-and-contemplation) in understanding the depths of poetry, and the recognition that the way of poetry and the way of the Buddha are one and the same.

Shunzei also implicitly invokes the Three Truths (Santai): emptiness (*kū*), provisionality (*ke*), and the middle way (*chū*), a paradigm acknowledging the coexistence of emptiness and provisionality and the transcendence of both. He uses these to

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The first two lines—"Ah, this world! No way beyond"—were interpreted in the medieval period to mean that the government was not in proper order, but the poem is probably better read as a personal lament, of "not having a way to live in the world." Finding the world unbearable, the speaker retreats to the mountains, but even in the mountains, there seems to be no escape from suffering: the mournful cries of the deer echo the speaker's feelings about the world.

32. The seven imperial waka anthologies are the *Kokinshū* (905), *Gosenshū* (951), *Shūishū* (1005–1007), *Goshūishū* (1086), *Kinyōshū* (1127), *Shikashū* (1151–1154), and *Senzaishū* (1187).

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advocate his own position, that poetry should not be regarded as dualistic, as consisting of only *kokoro* (meaning) and *kotoba* (diction), but should achieve the ideal of combining deep meaning and beautiful words. Although kokoro and kotoba are distinct, the ultimate goal—the middle way—is *sugata*, the poetic style or verbal expression, which emerges from both kokoro and kotoba and transcends the duality of the two.

The origins of Japanese poetry[33] are distant, and the history of its transmission is long.[34] Ever since the age of the powerful gods, when poetry became the art of this land, its expressions have encompassed the six modes,[35] and its words have flourished for myriad generations.[36] In the well-known words of the *Kana* Preface to the *Kokinshū*, the songs of Japan take the human heart as their seed and flourish as myriad leaves of words. As a result, whether we seek out the cherry blossoms of spring or view the tinted leaves of autumn, if we did not have what is called poetry, no one would know the color or the scent.[37] What would we have for an original heart?[38] For this reason, our emperors, one generation after another, have not abandoned poetry, and the members of various clans have never stopped competing to show their appreciation of poetry.

In the past as now, whether it is poetry rulebooks, poetic treatises, or collections of poetic diction,[39] the recording of famous places in poetry, or attempts to clarify ambiguities, one house after another has eagerly recorded these texts. Therefore, even though the contents seem to be the same, these texts have appeared in the world in great numbers. But when it comes to the style and diction [*sugata kotoba*][40] of this poetry, it is difficult to distinguish the good

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33. *Yamato uta*, as opposed to Chinese poetry.

34. The opening to the *Korai fūteishō* draws on the *Kana* Preface to the *Kokinshū*, which describes the history of the genre and outlines the "six modes" (*sama*) of poetic expression.

35. This echoes the "six modes" (*sama*) mentioned in the *Kana* Preface to the *Kokinshū*, which, in turn, derives from the six modes in the Great Preface to the *Book of Songs*.

36. That is, the waka tradition never dies.

37. The "color" and "scent"—that is, the beauty of the autumn leaves and flowers, which represent nature and the seasons in classical Japanese poetry.

38. Shunzei uses the term "original heart" (*moto no kokoro*), which suggests the term *hon'i*, or the poetic essence of a topic based on poetic or literary precedent. Shunzei describes two kinds of hearts (*kokoro*). The first is found in the preface to the *Kokinshū*: the emotions of this heart, which reacts to the world, grow into the words of the poem. The second heart is the original heart, a subjective state that sees and grasps the world as created by poetry. Shunzei implies that without poetry, we would not recognize or know how to react to the beauties of nature.

39. *Shiki* (poetic rule books), *zuinō* (poetic treatises), and *utamakura* (collections of poetic words).

40. *Sugata* indicates the style or expressive form of the poem. According to Shunzei's poetic judgments, *sugata* is the rhythm that emerges from the fusion of *kokoro* and *kotoba*. As related to *kotoba* (diction), *sugata* stresses the flow of the words; as related to *kokoro* (meaning or content), *sugata* stresses conceptualization.

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or characterize the bad. It is extremely difficult to explain, and those who understand are few in number.

Well, then, at the beginning of that text entitled *Calm and Contemplation*,[41] a person called Master Zhangan wrote, "The clarity and tranquillity of calm-and-contemplation is beyond anything known to previous generations."[42] Having heard that, I have come to realize the limitlessness of its depths and its profound meaning and admire it greatly. In the same way I have attempted to understand the good, the bad, and the depth of poetry—all of which has been difficult to describe in words. But I believe that it is possible to understand it by comparing it with calm-and-contemplation.

A passage in *Calm and Contemplation* makes clear the process by which the Buddha transmitted the dharma, the law of the Buddha, and informs us just how the way of the dharma has been passed down to the present. The great enlightened one, Shakyamuni, passed the dharma to Kasyapa,[43] who, in turn, transmitted it to Ananda. It was passed down in this fashion from teacher to disciple through twenty-three people. When we hear about the manner in which this law was passed down, we cannot help but feel great reverence. Japanese poetry has similarly been passed down from the distant past, and things called anthologies were compiled, and these enable us to attain a deep grasp of the forms of poetry, beginning with that in the *Man'yōshū* and continuing through that in the *Kokinshū*, *Gosenshū*, *Shūishū*, and on down.[44]

But the way of the Buddha as propounded by Shakyamuni has profound meaning, whereas poetry resembles the frivolity of floating words and specious phrases.[45] But the depth of things[46] manifests itself here, and through this connection, poetry has led people to the way of the Buddha. Since the suffering caused by attachment is nothing other than enlightenment, the Lotus Sutra states that "if a non-Buddhist classical text advocates doing something that helps one to live, that is following the proper path of the Buddha." The Fugen

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41. The opening line of *Calm and Contemplation* (*Maka shikan*), based on the lectures of the Chinese Buddhist thinker Zhiyi (Chigi, 538–597) and transcribed by his disciple Zhang'an (J. Shōan, 561–632). In *shikan* (calm-and-contemplation), the *shi* is the meditational act through which confused and random perception is brought to a stop. This stoppage is made possible through contemplation (*kan*).

42. Before the existence of the Tendai school.

43. Kasyapa (J. Kayō) and Ananda (J. Anan) are two of the ten disciples of Shakyamuni.

44. Poetic style/expression (*sugata/kotoba*) and implicitly the "original heart" (*moto no kokoro*) are passed down by poetic anthologies such as the *Man'yōshū* and the *Kokinshū*. The *Kokinshū*, *Gosenshū*, and *Shūishū* are the *Three Anthologies* (*Sandaishū*), the first of the imperial waka anthologies.

45. *Fugen kigyo* (floating words and specious phrases), a variation on *kyōgen kigo* (wild words and decorative phrases), represents the negative Buddhist view of literature as deceptive and causing sin.

46. The depth of things in which the way of poetry and the way of the Buddha merge.

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Bodhisattva Sutra[47] states, "What should be called sin? What should be called fortune? There is nothing inherent in things that makes them either good or bad. The mind by its very nature is empty." Thus when I speak of the depth of the way of poetry, I speak of it in terms of the Three Truths, of emptiness, the provisional, and the middle way.[48]

In attempting to speak of the positive aspect of poetry, Lord Kintō, the major counselor of the Fourth Ward, called his collection the *Collection of Golden Jewels*,[49] and in the preface to the *Goshūishū*, it appears that Lord Michitoshi said, "Its words [*kotoba*] are like brocade; its meaning [*kokoro*] is deeper than the ocean."[50] Although poetry is not always like a brocade, if you read poetry aloud and recite it to a rhythm, it will sound both elegant [*en*] and moving [*aware*]. Poetry was originally something to be recited aloud, and so, depending on the voice, it can sound good or bad.

In regard to the preceding, over the years, I have wanted, in one way or another, to express this. But even though I have felt these things in my heart, it was difficult to put them in words; and even though I have thought about this, it has been difficult to speak of it; and thus time has passed.

But now a certain exalted personage,[51] having profoundly understood the way of Japanese poetry, stated, "One says that the style [*sugata*] of the poetry is fine or that the words are beautiful. With regard to what kind of poems does one say this? About composing poems in general, even if the words are as long as the fisherfolk's cord, please gather them like seaweed and offer them to me."

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47. Kan-fugen-gyō (Scripture on the Practice of the Contemplation of the Bodhisattva Samantabhadra) is a sutra that expands on the teachings of the Lotus Sutra.

48. Shunzei here introduces the Three Truths (Santai), or *kū-ge-chū* (emptiness, the provisional, the middle way), advocated by Tendai Buddhism. The first truth is *kū* (emptiness), that all phenomena are empty of self, that nothing is unconditional or independent. The second truth is *ke* (the provisional), that all phenomena exist provisionally. The third truth is the middle way (*chū*), which is the recognition of the codependence of *kū* and *ke*, of the empty and the provisional. The world is empty, without anything permanent, but the world also exists as a phenomenon, as samsara. Shunzei brings in this notion of nondualism, or the middle way, to show that there is no difference between the sacred and the profane. The two are one. This implies that poetic activity is Buddhist activity. In short, Shunzei uses the "Three Truths" or the Middle Way as a defense against the notion of *kyōgen kigo*, that the composition of poetry is a Buddhist sin.

49. *Kingyoku-shū* (1007), a private anthology edited by Fujiwara no Kintō (966–1041), with 718 poems. Kintō was the editor of *Wakan rōeishū*, *Shinsen zuinō*, and other poetic treatises.

50. Fujiwara no Kintō and Fujiwara no Michitoshi identify poetry with *kotoba* (diction) and *kokoro* (meaning). This *kotoba/kokoro* dualism dominated waka poetics from Ki no Tsurayuki onward. Drawing on the concept of the Three Truths of Tendai, Shunzei suggests that the two become one in *sugata*, in expression and style, which can be appreciated fully only when read aloud to a rhythm. This represents a fundamental change in the approach to poetry, which had been thought to rest on the dualistic notion of *kotoba* and *kokoro*.

51. This refers to Princess Shokushi, for whom this collection was composed.

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That personage inquired out of a true knowledge of the way of poetry, just as the woodcutters know the part of Tsukuba Mountain thick with trees and the fisherfolk know the bottom of the ocean. The people of the world believe only that one should simply compose a poem spontaneously and do not think about looking into it deeply. But understanding the depth of this poetic path, even if one parts the forest of words and dips into the sea of brushes,[52] remains difficult. Therefore I have collected the best poems from the early period, beginning with those in the *Man'yōshū*; from the middle period, in the *Kokinshū*, *Gosenshū*, and *Shūishū*; and from the recent period, in the *Goshūishū*. As the times change, so too do the styles [*sugata*] and the diction [*kotoba*]. These changes appear in successive generations of anthologies. I have decided to record a small part of that.

Although it is difficult to speak of the style and meaning of Japanese poetry, I have drawn analogies with the Buddhist path and referred to Buddhist scripture. One may write for one's own personal needs, but when writing for a person of high status, the text should be felicitous, drawing years from the everlasting bamboo and pine and stretching out life with the crane and the turtle. No doubt some will criticize me, but since I do not have much longer to live—no longer than the fragile dew on the weeds—I cannot wait for tomorrow. I devote myself to the sound of the waves on the bay of Japanese poetry, dye my heart with the color of the pines at Suminoue, sway in the direction of the smoke at Shioya,[53] and gather the weeds in the bay.[54] But I wonder whether what I have done for the way of poetry may in fact be detrimental. While the traces of my brush remain and I am still alive, I will naturally put my heart into poetry; and those colleagues who criticize me as well as those who follow my path of poetry, after a spring of ten thousand generations and an autumn of a thousand years, will—owing to the deep meaning of Japanese poetry—awaken to the inexhaustibility of the Buddhist scriptures, attain the karmic ties to be reborn in paradise, and be saved by the Fugen Bodhisattva's vow. Instead of being a sin, as Bo Juyi thought, the composition of poetry will become a means of praising the Buddha, of listening to the Buddhist law, of being reborn in the land of the Amida Buddha, and of saving all living creatures in this world of suffering and samsara.

During the middle of the Seventh Month of the eighth year of Kenkyū (1197), the evening wind near my grass hut is cool; my sleeves of moss are thick with

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52. To study numerous poems.

53. "Dye my heart with the color of the pines at Suminoue" means to pray for the protection of the god of poetry at Sumiyoshi. "Sway in the direction of the smoke at Shioya" means that "my writing has been lopsided."

54. That is, gather a large number of poems.

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morning dew; the ink that I have rubbed has been washed away; and the traces of the brush of old age, increasingly uncertain, have come to an end. These are the reasons that I have called this a collection of notes on poetic styles [*sugata*] from the ancient period to the present.[55]. . .

As the months and the seasons change and as the cherry blossoms give way to bright autumn leaves, we are reminded of the expressions [*sugata kotoba*] of poetry and feel as though we can discern the quality and character of poems.[56]

At the beginning of spring, the colors are many—the rose plum near the eaves, its blossoms emerging from beneath the snow, and the plum blossoms in the hedge of the peasant's house—and yet their fragrance is the same, penetrating the sleeve that breaks off the branches and clinging to the body. When spring flowers are at their height, the cherry blossoms in the hills of Yoshino become confused with the lingering snow, not to mention the cherry blossoms in full bloom at the imperial palace, which look like layers of white clouds. As the spring deepens, the frogs sing amid the mountain roses at Ide, and in the waves of the wisteria on the riverbank, the evening warbler appears to regret the eventual passing of spring—all these things leave a deep impression on me. The iris in the Iwagaki swamps, the azaleas that lighten the foothills—on each occasion there is nothing that does not move someone. . . .

When winter comes, frost forms heavily on the withered leaves of the reeds, frozen by ice on the water's edge. Needless to say, when the snow falls, it is mistaken for flowers blooming in the rocks. And as for the snow that lies on the pines, green to the end, as the end of the year quickly approaches, I feel the ice of my sleeves piercing my body. If one understands the style of Japanese poetry in this fashion, thinking in this way of the passage of the four seasons, truly, one's expression [*sugata*] will be elevated, pure, charming, and elegant.[57]

POETRY MATCHES (*UTA-AWASE*)

Poetry matches (*uta-awase*) were both a major literary and a social activity of the Heian aristocracy. In this unique blend, literature, fine arts, aesthetic re-

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55. Shunzei implicitly opposes the *Korai fūteishō* to the *shiki* (rule books), *zuinō* (poetic treatises), and *utamakura* (diction collections), which were about rules, precedents, and examples but did not embody the way of poetry. One "awakens" to the way of poetry by immersing oneself in the larger transmission, which includes poetry from the *Man'yōshū* to the recent present, particularly the *Sandaishū*.

56. As the seasons change, we recall the various poetic associations with things in nature. In the following description, Shunzei uses poetic expressions drawn from earlier poetry to transmit the quintessential associations of seasonal topics.

57. The terms used here are "elevated" (*takaku*), "pure" (*kiyoge*), "charming" (*en*), and "elegant" (*yū*).

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finement, and court protocol were superbly synthesized. Although poetry competitions had been held in China for centuries, it is generally thought that the Heian poetry matches originated independently, incorporating the tradition of object-matching games (*mono-awase*), which compared objects, pictures, shells, perfumes, or flowers, and the tradition of competitions of physical prowess (*waza-kurabe*), in which participants competed in activities like horseback riding and archery.

In a typical poetry match, the participants were divided into two teams (Left and Right) and asked to compose poems on assigned topics (*dai*). These could be assigned either on the day or in advance, depending on the nature of the event. The compositions were then read aloud and assessed by a judge, normally a high-ranking noble or a distinguished poet. Although the poems naturally had a prominent role, their presentation and performance were almost as important. Besides the competitors themselves, the staging of this elaborate court ritual included chanters, scribes, consultants, and musicians, as well as an audience of court dignitaries.

The impact of poetry matches on the development of classical poetry was enormous. Composition on fixed topics (*dai-ei*) soon became the norm for all public or formal waka. Moreover, because an orthodox treatment of the topic often meant victory, the popularity of the matches also helped direct poets toward conservative treatments of themes, imagery, and diction. Finally, the judgments following each round of the major contests were a prelude to the development of a great tradition of waka poetics and criticism.

Although the oldest surviving examples of poetry matches date from the late ninth century, it was not until the tenth century that the form began to flourish. The Poetry Match at Teishi Mansion (Teishi-in uta-awase, 913), hosted and judged by the retired emperor Uda (r. 887–897), and the Poetry Matches at the Inner Palace in 960 (Tentoku yo'nen dairi uta-awase, 960), hosted by Emperor Murakami (r. 946–967) in the Seiryō Hall of the imperial palace,[58] were remembered by later generations as unsurpassed precedents for official court poetry matches. Later in the Heian period, paralleling the decline of the court, the element of performance gradually became less important as the matches became more eminently literary pursuits. The massive Poetry Match in Six Hundred Rounds (Roppyakuban uta-awase, 1194), comprising twelve hundred poems, and its even larger successor, the Poetry Match in Fifteen Hundred Rounds (Sengohyakuban uta-awase, 1201), rank among the most significant examples of this later phase. Although poetry matches continued to be held

58. The Seiryō Hall (Seiryōden) was the personal residence of the emperor in the Inner Palace.

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through the Meiji period (1868–1911), their direct influence on the development of poetry diminished sharply after the Kamakura period.

POETRY MATCHES AT THE INNER PALACE IN 960 (TENTOKU YO'NEN DAIRI UTA-AWASE, 960)

Hosted by Emperor Murakami on the last day of the Third Month of Tentoku 4 (960) after nearly a month of preparation, this event was to be remembered as the outstanding example of the courtly poetry match. Four different records, in both Chinese and Japanese, survive, recording everything down to the minutest details about the attire of the participants, who included some of the finest poets of the day. In charge of evaluating the poems and pronouncing the verdicts was the minister of the left, Fujiwara no Saneyori (900–970), a distinguished poet himself as well as the highest-ranking official in the court. The match consisted of twenty rounds on twelve different topics: "Mist" (*kasumi*, a seasonal motif for early spring), "The Bush Warbler" (two rounds), "Green Willows," "Cherry Blossoms" (three rounds), "Late Winter," "Wisteria," "Late Spring," "Early Summer," "White Verbena," "The Cuckoo" (two rounds), "Summer Grasses," and "Love" (five rounds). As many as thirty-six of the total of forty poems were later included in the twenty-one imperial collections of waka, which testifies to the great prestige that the event enjoyed in subsequent centuries. Also indicative of its historical significance is the wealth of anecdotes based on episodes in the participants' lives. According to one of the most famous, the poet Tadami[59] fell ill after losing to his opponent in the twentieth round and eventually died as a result.

Round 1: Mist

LEFT (WINNER)

Kurahashi no	From between the
yama no kai yori	hills of Kurahashi[60]
harugasumi	the spring mist crosses,
toshi o tsumite ya	to lay one new year
tachiwataruramu	upon another?

Fujiwara no Asatada[61]

59. Mibu no Tadami (dates uncertain) was the son of Mibu no Tadamine, one of the compilers of the *Kokinshū*, and selected by Kintō as one of the Thirty-six Poetic Immortals.

60. Literally, Storehouse-bridge Hills.

61. The fifth son of the minister of the right, Fujiwara no Sadakata, Asatada (910–966) reached the junior third rank and the position of middle counselor (*chūnagon*). A distinguished poet, he took part in the key poetic events of his age and was one of the Thirty-six Poetic Immortals.

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RIGHT

furusato wa	The old capital
harumeki ni keri	shows signs of spring:
Miyoshino no	mist engulfs
Mikaki no hara o	the plain of Mikaki
kasumi kometari	at fair Yoshino.

Taira no Kanemori[62]

After the poems were read, I was ordered to decide the winner but hesitated, saying: "I myself can barely put together thirty-one syllables:[63] it would be quite difficult for me to decide the winner. I humbly implore that His Majesty judge." The emperor declared: "If a winner is not selected, the interest in today's event will wane, and later generations will surely remember us with consternation. A decision must be made promptly."[64] His Highness's refusal made the futility of my hesitation all the more apparent.

"Laying one new year upon another in the Storehouse Hills (Kurahashi-yama)" in the Left's poem is quite satisfactory. The same is true of linking "crosses" with "bridge."[65] And the configuration (*furumai*) of the poem leaves nothing to be desired.[66] For the Right's poem, how, after all, does "old capital" evoke the coming of spring? And "mist engulfs" [the plain] seems startling (*osoroshi*), doesn't it?[67] Between the two, only His Majesty could decide. I looked repeatedly for him to make a sign, but His Highness expressed no preference. Hence, I declared the Left's poem the winner.

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62. A middle-rank courtier and poet, Kanemori (d. 990) reached the junior fifth rank upper. Eighty-three of his poems figure in the twenty-one imperial collections (*chokusenshū*).

63. In other words, cannot compose a waka.

64. This exchange between Emperor Murakami and the judge Saneyori, aside from certain comic qualities, well expresses the participants' consciousness of the historical importance of the event. Also, it was customary that the Left team win the first round.

65. The judge praises the skillful use of word associations (*engo*). The name Kurahashi contains the word *hashi* (bridge) to which the image of crossing (*wataru*) is tied.

66. This event is also notable for the use of critical terms that become common currency in later poetic criticism and commentaries. Configuration (*furumai*) denotes the form or shaping of a poem, as opposed to *kokoro* (meaning, content). In later poetic criticism, the term *sugata* is more commonly used.

67. The term *osoroshi* was widely used to criticize the use of words that contrasted with the customary decorum associated with waka, especially at formal occasions such as poetry competitions. In this case, the judge condemns Kanemori's use of the transitive verb *komu* (to crowd, engulf) instead of the more common *tatsu* (to rise, linger). The poem might have also been considered inappropriate for its inauspicious overtones. The Mikaki Plain was a pillow word used to refer to the old capital, Nara. Evoking the old city in ruin contrasted with the festive atmosphere of the event.

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Round 9: Wisteria

LEFT

murasaki ni	Glowing purple
niou fujinami	waves of wisteria
uchihaete	stretch out
matsu ni zo chiyo no	to the pine that bears
iro wa kakareru	the color of a thousand ages.

Fujiwara no Asatada

RIGHT (WINNER)

ware yukite	Until I come
iro miru bakari to	see their color,
Sumiyoshi no	don't pluck bare
kishi no fujinami	the waves of wisteria
ori na tsukushi so	on the shore of Sumiyoshi.

Taira no Kanemori

The Left's poem: the phrase "waves of wisteria" appears often enough in old poems, even without an explicit link to the topic "water." However, because no one now is familiar with this precedent, it seems to have passed out of usage. I wonder whether it is appropriate for a poetry match.[68] One should not use such a phrase without linking it to another word, as there is no basis for doing so. Instead, it should be linked to a word such as water, pond, or shore.[69] The poem's form [*utagara*] is splendid [*kiyoge-nari*].

The Right's poem: the same "waves" appears, but since it is linked to "shore," the usage is justified. This is how it was done in the past, and not only for "waves of wisteria." His Highness seemed to agree. I asked Major Counselor Minamoto, who said: "This is truly difficult to decide. For now, I suspect this should be judged a tie." But the team of the Right spoke up in distress: "The Left's poem uses 'waves of wisteria' with no mention of water—how can that be allowed?" And since they had reason to object, I declared the Right the winner.

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68. Saneyori's perplexity well illustrates how the evaluation of a poem at poetry matches was strongly constrained by specific norms dictated by the nature of the event, and was often independent from the intrinsic qualities of the poem itself.

69. The judge is here advocating consistency of imagery and clarity of meaning to be achieved through the use of word associations (*engo*). The word "waves" must be linked to semantically related words, as it is in Kanemori's poem. The thirteenth-century treatise *Yakumo mishō* by Emperor Juntoku, however, dismisses this objection (*sashimonaki nan*).

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Round 20: Love

LEFT

koi suchō	"He is in love!" they say,
wa ga na wa madaki	my name so quickly
tachinikeri	rumored abroad,
hito shirezu koso	though in secret
omoisomeshika	did I first long for you.

Mibu no Tadami

RIGHT (WINNER)

shinoburedo	Though I try to hide them,
iro ni idenikeri	my countenance betrays
wa ga koi wa	my feelings:
mono ya omou to	now everyone is asking
hito no tou made	"Are you in love?"

Taira no Kanemori

Commanded to speak, I said: "Both poems are outstanding. It is beyond me to decide which is the winner." His Highness spoke: "Each is certainly admirable. Nonetheless, a decision must be made." I yielded to Major Counselor Lord Minamoto, who bowed and declined to respond. Both teams started to recite their poems aloud, as if to beg for victory for their side. Once again I looked to His Majesty for advice, but even though he offered no judgment, he seemed to be reciting the poem by the Right to himself. Lord Minamoto discreetly told me, "His Majesty's favor would seem to lie with the Right." On this basis, I ended up giving the victory to the Right. I still had doubts and, for a while, wondered whether it should be a tie.[70] I did greatly admire the Left's poem.

POETRY MATCH AT THE RESIDENCE OF CHAMBERLAIN TADAMICHI ON THE SECOND OF THE TENTH MONTH OF 1118 (GEN'EI GANNEN JŪGATSU FUTSUKA NAIDAIJIN TADAMICHI IE UTA-AWASE, 1118)

By the early twelfth century, it had become customary to hold poetry matches at the private residences of high-ranking nobles. The host of this match, Fujiwara no Tadamichi (1097–1164), belonged to the powerful northern branch of the Fujiwara

70. As the contested decision shows, both poems were considered very fine, and both figure in the *Shūishū* (Love, nos. 621 and 622), edited by Fujiwara no Kintō, and in Teika's *Ogura hyakunin isshu* (nos. 40 and 41). Nevertheless, Tadami's disappointment was great. An anecdote in the setsuwa *Collection of Sand and Pebbles* (*Shasekishū*) reports that as a result of this defeat he lost his appetite and died shortly after the match (NKBT 85:240–241).

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clan, which had produced generations of regents. Even though the regent families were traditionally the custodians of Chinese studies, Tadamichi was extremely fond of poetry in Japanese and is believed to have hosted at least twenty of these events.

The most notable characteristic of this match was the joint participation of two judges, Minamoto no Toshiyori[71] and Fujiwara no Mototoshi, [72] each of whom passed judgment on each round. Both were well-respected poets and ranked among the foremost authorities on poetic matters. Their comments on the poems thus are often cited in later matches as precedents. Thirty-six rounds were held on three topics: "Autumn Showers," "Late Chrysanthemums," and "Love."

Round 3: Autumn Showers

LEFT WINNER (TOSHIYORI)

shigure ni wa	From autumn showers
iro naranu mi no	I seek the shelter
sodegasa mo	of my uncolored sleeves
nurureba kaoru	now soaked through—
mono ni zo arikeru	how radiantly they glow!

Lady of the Lesser Captain[73]

RIGHT WINNER (MOTOTOSHI)

fuyu kureba	When winter comes
chirishiku niwa no	the oak leaves
nara no ha ni	in the garden scattered
shigure otonau	echo the autumn showers
mi yamabe no sato	in a village by the foothills.

Lord Masakane[74]

Toshiyori said: "The first poem says 'uncolored [self].'[75] I wonder whether that means that the robes she is wearing are white or that the person is not an expert

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71. A poet and scholar of waka, he (1055?–1129?) is the author of the treatise *Toshiyori zuinō* (*Toshiyori's Poetic Essentials*), one of the earliest attempts to elaborate a comprehensive poetics of waka. At the command of the cloistered emperor Shirakawa, he compiled the *Kin'yōshū*, the fifth imperial collection of poetry.

72. A poet and scholar of waka. More conservative than his rival Toshiyori, he (d. 1142) is known for his predilection for the poetry of the *Man'yōshū*. He initiated Shunzei into the secrets of the *Kokinshū*.

73. Shōshōkō. Toshiyori's daughter.

74. Fujiwara no Masakane (1079–1143). His talent as a poet was appreciated by Emperors Toba and Shirakawa, and nine of his poems appear in the *Kin'yōshū* (ca. 1127).

75. The word *mi* (self) in the poem is both the end of the phrase *iro naranu mi* (literally, "my colorless self," the phrase suggests innocence of or perhaps ineptness in matters of love) and the beginning of the phrase *mi no sode* (my sleeves). Only the second meaning is captured in the translation.

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in matters of love [*irogonomi*]. If it means the robes are white, it makes little sense to say that the color changes. If it alludes to not being an expert in matters of love, the glowing of sleeves makes no sense. Overall, the form [*utagara*] is smooth [*nadaraka*]. The other poem seems to do a poor job of adapting old precedents.[76] Where it might have said 'the garden where oak leaves scattered,' instead it has 'the oak leaves in the garden scattered.' The syntax seems askew. This is contrived, and since one cannot overlook the misuse of an old poem, perhaps it should lose."

Mototoshi said: "'Uncolored [self]' stirs my curiosity about what kind of self this is. Such phrases as 'they glow when wet' were used in old poems, but only for plums and the like. I would prefer to visit those foothills where autumn showers echo."[77]

Round 2: Love

LEFT WINNER (TOSHIYORI)

kuchioshi ya	How regrettable!
kumoigakure ni	Even a dragon that lives
sumu tatsu mo	in the shade of the clouds
omou hito ni ha	can be seen by
miekeru mono o	its lover . . .

Lord Toshiyori

RIGHT WINNER (MOTOTOSHI)

katsu miredo	I met you but once
nao zo koishiki	yet still long for you,
wagimoko ga	my spouse
yutsu no tsumagushi	the sacred comb:
ika de sasamashi	how I would like to set you right![78]

Lord Mototoshi

Toshiyori said: "The first poem is hard to understand and, indeed, extremely unusual. The comb in the second poem refers to the occasion of Susano-o's

76. It is not clear what old precedents Toshiyori may have had in mind.

77. Mototoshi is adopting the imagery of the poem to express his preference for the poem of the Right (his own).

78. A reference to an episode in the *Kojiki* (*Record of Ancient Matters*) and *Nihon shoki* (*Chronicles of Japan*). Having been presented with Hair Comb Fields as his spouse, Susano-o transforms her into a comb that he inserts into his hair.

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first encounter with Hair Comb Fields, when he [transformed her into a comb and] placed it in his hair. 'I met you but once' implies that they already have met, but the final line, 'how I would like to set you right!' suggests that he has not yet done so. The text seems to contradict itself. In such cases one should ask the poet. This differs from the original text. Is there perhaps a mistake?[79] No verdict can be pronounced."

Mototoshi said: "I have never before seen phrases like 'How regrettable!' used in poems for poetry matches.[80] This is beneath contempt. As the people of old said, in composing poetry both in Chinese and Japanese, one puts the blossoms [*hana*] first, and the fruit [*mi*] second.[81] Thus, such phrases are never used in any of the family collections or in poetry matches, let alone in an opening line. And 'the crane that lives in the shade of the clouds'[82]—this is something I have yet to encounter in waka. I wonder whether it is a reference to a Chinese text. Perhaps it refers to the episode 'Cranes Hovering Under the Sun' in the *Shishuo*.[83] But the next line in that text reads: 'See the crane make its way through the blue clouds.'[84] It obviously suggests that the crane is flying in the shade of the clouds, not that it lives in the clouds! Or perhaps the poet is calling cranes the hens of Huainan that entered the clouds.[85] The *Classic of Cranes* by Lord Genkin[86] says: 'At the age of 180, cranes meet and bear offspring.' If that is the case, how can this be appropriate for a person? Furthermore, since there is no mention [in this anecdote] of 'dwelling in the shade of clouds,' it seems irrelevant. On the whole, neither the words nor the sense of this poem is acceptable. As for the Right's poem, there are no errors of diction, and the form is faultless. Would it be wrong to say that it is acceptable?"

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79. Toshiyori is suggesting that the poem in question differs from the poem originally composed for the match.

80. Mototoshi is right: the words do not seem to appear in previous poems.

81. The maxim is cited in Kiyosuke's *Book in Folio* (*Fukuro-zōshi*, mid-twelfth century), but a similar metaphor had already been used in the *mana* (Sino-Japanese) preface to the *Kokinshū*. It refers to the primacy of diction over content.

82. Mototoshi has evidently mistaken the word *tatsu* (dragon) for *tazu* (crane), which would read identically in a *kana* transcription without diacritics marking the voiced and unvoiced consonants.

83. *Shishuo xinyu* (J. *Sesetsu shingo*), a (Liu) Song-dynasty (420–478) collection of anecdotes compiled in the first half of the fifth century.

84. There are several variants of this text, but the part cited by Mototoshi does not appear in the most popular version.

85. A reference to another Chinese legend contained in the *Shinsenden* attributed to Ge Hong (J. Kakkō) of the Eastern Jin (J. Shin) period (317–420). According to the legend, the king of Huainan (J. Enan) achieved immortality by drinking a magic potion. Having ascended to the sky, he left the container with the residual liquid in the garden. The house dog and hens drank it and also ascended to the sky.

86. An unspecified text in Chinese. Genkin is perhaps a pseudonym of the lord of Huainan.

เนื้อหาคุ้มครองลิขสิทธิ์

POETRY MATCH IN SIX HUNDRED ROUNDS (ROPPYAKUBAN UTA-AWASE, 1194)

Held over several sessions in 1194 at the residence of the then great commander of the left, Fujiwara Yoshitsune, this event was the result of an extremely long and elaborate process of compilation, requiring years to complete. In 1192 the host commissioned hundred-poem sequences from twelve poets, for a total of twelve hundred poems. One hundred topics were assigned, arranged in five categories: spring, summer, autumn, winter, and love. Once the individual sequences had been submitted, the poems were paired into rounds, read and commented on by the team members, and finally submitted to the leading poet of the time, Fujiwara Shunzei (1114–1204), for a final assessment.

The event remains one of the most important in the long history of poetry matches, notably because it foregrounded the opposition between poets of the two leading poetic houses: the Rokujō,[87] headed by Kenshō (1130?–1210?) and Fujiwara Akitsune (1131–1221), and the Mikohidari,[88] led by Monk Jakuren (d. 1202) and Shunzei's son Teika (1162–1241). The debates that followed each round often became the occasion for heated disputes. Ton'a (1289–1372) writes in his *Seiashō* (ca. 1360) that although some poets were often unable to attend every round, Kenshō and Jakuren always were there and that their meetings would often turn into quarrels, with Kenshō brandishing his stick and Jakuren straightening his curved back. Finally, the lucidity of Shunzei's judgments as an exposition of his poetic ideals had a tremendous impact on generations of later poets.

Spring (second part)

Round 26: Spring Dawn

LEFT

kono yo ni wa	Just as I vow
kokoro tomeji to	"I won't let my heart
omou ma ni	dwell in the world,"
nagame zo hatenu	I gaze without end
haru no akebono	on this spring dawn.[89]

Kenshō

87. Literally, Sixth Ward. The house probably takes its name from the location of one of the residences of the founder, Fujiwara no Akisue (1055–1123).

88. The house takes its name (literally, Prince of the Left) from Prince (*miko*) Kaneakira, one of the sons of Emperor Daigo (r. 897–930), who for a period of time held the position of minister of the left (*hidari*).

89. *Haru no akebono* is a double topic that stirs much controversy in the judgment. Here, the beauty of the scene intervenes to complicate the poet's resolution to renounce the world.

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RIGHT (WINNER)

nani to naku	For no reason at all
kokoro ukinuru	my heart comes unsettled:
hitorine ni	waking alone
akebono no tsuraki	to a dawn the color
haru no iro kana	of spring's indifference.[90]

Lord Takanobu[91]

The Right said: "Using the phrase 'spring dawn' in the poem shows lack of consideration.[92] If the topic is 'Spring Dawn,' one ought to consider carefully how to express it." The Left said there were no particular faults to note. The Judge said: "With regard to the Left's poem, the Right claims that the explicit use of the word '(spring) dawn' is thoughtless, but is that really so? Even in the case of compound topics [*musubidai*], only certain words of the topic are to be avoided in the poem.[93] But in the case of a topic like 'Spring Dawn,' not to include it explicitly in the poem amounts to ignoring the precepts. The words 'just as' [*ma ni*] in the Left's poem sound quite insufficient here. Thus, I must declare the Right the winner."

Winter (first part)

Round 13: Withered Fields

LEFT (WINNER)

mishi aki o	How might I recall
nani ni nokosan	the autumn now past?
kusa no hara	All the colors
hitotsu ni kauru	of a field of grass
nobe no keshiki ni	now one barren plain.[94]

Lady-in-Waiting[95]

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90. In the tradition of courtly love, the dawn epitomizes the torments of love, being the moment when two lovers must part.

91. Fujiwara no Takanobu (1142–1205), a gifted poet and painter.

92. The Right team claims that the explicit mention of the topic is a careless mistake.

93. A compound topic is composed of more than two words/characters (for example, "Full moon above the sea"). In these cases, Shunzei argues, it is appropriate to disperse the topic across the poem or leave part of it implicit; otherwise, it is correct to use the topic as assigned, as Kenshō does. In defending Kenshō's poem from the opponents' criticism, Shunzei demonstrates a remarkable impartiality.

94. Both poems in this round thematize the tension between the barren desolation of the withered field before the eyes and the luxuriant colors of the autumnal scene in memory.

95. A pseudonym of the host, Yoshitsune.

เนื้อหาคุ้มครองลิขสิทธิ์

RIGHT

shimogare no	You who do not see
nobe no aware o	the charm of a withered field
minu hito ya	covered with frost,
aki no iro ni wa	your heart must still be
kokoro tomeken	with the colors of autumn.

Lord Takanobu

The Right said: "'A field of grass' does not sound right." The Left said: "The Right's poem is stale." The judge said: "The Left's 'How might I recall . . . a field of grass?' is, on the contrary, charming [*en*].[96] The Right's criticism of 'field of grass' is most inappropriate. Murasaki Shikibu was more accomplished as a writer of tales than as a poet. And indeed, 'The Festival of the Cherry Blossoms' (Hana no en) is especially charming.[97] A poet who has not read *Genji* should be ashamed.[98] The Right's poem is lacking in neither meaning nor diction. Its style, however, must be considered quite ordinary. For its merits, the Left's poem should be declared the winner."

Love 7

Round 7: Love Through Marine Images

LEFT

kujira toru	The mighty sea
sakashiki umi no	where whales are caught:
soko made mo	were you to inhabit
kimi dani sumaba	its farthest depths
namiji shinogan	I would cross the trail of waves.

Kenshō

96. *En*, translated here as "charming," is a key concept of the late Heian and medieval aesthetics closely associated with Shunzei. It is an ideal of sensuous beauty with overtones of elegance and luster.

97. "The Festival of the Cherry Blossoms" is the eighth chapter of *The Tale of Genji*. The phrase "a grassy plain" appears in a poem that Oborozukiyo composes in response to Genji's pressing requests to know her name.

98. The endorsement of the Mikohidari poets and this passage in particular had a crucial role in the medieval canonization of Murasaki's work. There has been much dispute over how to interpret this passage. One possibility is that the judge is reprimanding the ignorance of the Left team, which failed to recognize the allusion to *Genji*.

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RIGHT (WINNER)

Iwamigata	The inlet of Iwami
chihiro no soko mo	for all its thousand-fathom depth
tatoureba	is but a shoal
asaki se ni naru	when measured against
mi no urami ka na	my longing.

Priest Jakuren

The Right said: "The Left's poem is frightening." The Left commented: "No particular faults in the Right's poem." The judge said: "Although I seem to recall that the 'where the whales are caught' in the Left's poem appears in the *Man'yōshū*,[99] it must be with those poems in the mad style [*kyōkatei*]. In any case, it sounds very frightening. Even when the Qin emperor visited Penglai, he simply said, 'Shoot the big fish!'[100] I have never heard that he said, 'Catch it!' As a rule, poetry should strive for beauty and refinement [*yūen*]; deliberately frightening people is of no benefit to either the Way or the poet. In the Right's poem, 'The inlet of Iwami' and 'my longing [resentment]'[101] suggest the lament of one who has failed to attain a promotion at court. The love motif is insufficient. Nevertheless, the Left's poem is inadmissible." This is a victory for the Right.[102]

[Translated by Gian Piero Persiani and Lewis Cook]

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99. The expression appears in an elegy for Emperor Tenchi (*Man'yōshū*, vol. 2, no. 153) and other poems.

100. A reference to a legend contained in the *Records of the Historian* (*Shi ji*, J. *Shiki*), by the great Han historian Sima Qian. In the episode in question, Emperor Shihuangdi (J. Shikōtei, r. 221–210 B.C.E.), founder of the Qin dynasty, orders his retainer Xu Fu to go to Penglai (J. Hōrai), one of the Daoist Isles of the Blessed, in search of the Elixir of Immortality. Upon his return, Xu Fu reports that he was unable to land on the island because of a giant whale. Some legends say that this mythic land may be Mount Hōrai (present-day Wakayama Prefecture), which at the time might still have been surrounded by the sea.

101. This is an association between the words "inlet" and "bay" (*ura*), concealed in the word "longing [resentment]" (*ura-mi*). Although *urami* literally means "resentment," in court poetry, as this poem exemplifies, it was frequently taken as a synonym for "longing" or "unrequited love" (*koi*).

102. In response to Shunzei's criticism, Kenshō wrote his own comments on the rounds (*Kensho chinjo*). With regard to this poem, he wrote: "Is to capture whales really frightening? Those versed in poetry should know no fear." The disagreement over the opportunity to use words from the *Man'yōshū* reflects the different views held by Shunzei and Kenshō and by their respective schools. For Shunzei, who advocated refinement of imagery and elegance of diction, many of the rougher or more colloquial expressions of the *Man'yōshū* had no legitimate place in poetry.

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FUJIWARA NO TEIKA

Fujiwara no Teika (1162–1241), or Sadaie, was the son of Shunzei and heir to the Mikohidari house of poetry. Teika was recognized at a fairly early age as one of the most controversially innovative poets of his generation, and he was one of the four primary compilers of the *Shinkokinshū*. From the age of eighteen to the age of seventy-four, he kept a diary entitled the *Meigetsuki*. Between 1185 and 1199, he began to explore a new poetic style, which was criticized as "*daruma*" poems, or "incomprehensible" poems. Despite his audacious experiments with syntax and disdain for convention, Teika could also be remarkably conservative, especially in his later years, and notoriously called for a return to early classical models of composition. His dictum "new meanings, old words" is an emblem of the difficult demands he made for originality within the constraints of precedent. Few poets were able to follow Teika's demands without resorting to tedious conventionalism. This fact, combined with his overwhelming influence as the patriarch of the dominant schools of court poetry for several centuries, is often blamed for the stultification of courtly waka after the thirteenth century. Forty-six of Teika's poems were included in the *Shinkokinshū*.

ESSENTIALS OF POETIC COMPOSITION
(*EIGA NO TAIGAI*, CA. 1222)

Essentials of Poetic Composition explains Teika's approach to waka composition in his later years and reflects a fundamental technique of medieval aristocratic literature: allusive variation. *Essentials of Poetic Composition* divides poetic technique into three key notions: meaning (*kokoro*), diction (*kotoba*), and style (*fūtei*). The meaning (*kokoro*) of a poem should be neither "old" (*inishie*) nor "modern" (*ima*); instead, it should be "new" (*atarashi*). Teika usually uses the word *kokoro* in close relation to the "topic" (*dai*). Thus a more elaborate translation of the opening line would be: "For the meaning of the poem as it relates to the essence of the given topic, one should, above all, be innovative." Diction (*kotoba*), by contrast, should be "old." What *kokoro* and *kotoba* have in common here is that neither can be "modern."

Teika also contrasts "modern poets"—from the latter half of the twelfth century—with "ancient poets" and strictly forbids drawing on either the diction or the meaning introduced by "modern poets"—that is, those writing in the past seventy or eighty years. For him, diction must be circumscribed and publicly recognized. "Old diction" is not a matter of age but of the canon. "Old words" refers to the poetic diction exemplified in the *Three Collections* (*Sandaishū*): the *Kokinshū*, *Gosenshū*, and *Shūishū*, the first three imperial collections of waka. The only exceptions are the poems of the *Man'yōshū*, primarily those by Hitomaro, Akahito, and Yakamochi, which are included in the *Thirty-six Poets' Collection* (*Sanjūrokuninshū*), compiled by Fujiwara no Kintō in the mid-Heian period. With regard to "style" (*fūtei*), however, Teika notes that one should learn from poets both "old and new." In summary, the meaning of

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the poem should be new; its diction should derive from the superior poems in the *Three Collections*; and the superior poems of both old and new poets should provide a model for poetic style.

Teika also is concerned about plagiarism and the lack of originality. His rules for allusive variation (*honkadori*) on a base poem are an extension of those he prescribed for *kotoba* and represent a solution to the difficulties imposed by the necessity of using only "old" diction. At the end of the preface, which is written in kanbun, Teika notes that "one should always keep in mind the scene [*keiki*] of old poetry and let it sink deep into the heart." *Keiki* refers to not just the poetic scenes and images that appear in the poetic world but also its poetic associations. Significantly, Chinese poetry, which played a significant role in the development of Heian waka, became a major source for these associations. In the original text, certain lines appear to be notes—as they are in smaller print than that of the main text—and have been placed in parentheses in the translation.

When it comes to the meaning [*kokoro*] of poetry, newness must come first. (One must seek a conception or an approach that has yet to be used.) When it comes to diction [*kotoba*], one must use old words. (One must not use anything not found in the *Three Collections*. The poems of ancient poets collected in the *Shinkokinshū* can be used in the same way.) The style [*fūtei*] of poetry can be learned from the superior poems of superior poets of the past. (One should not be concerned about the period but just learn from appropriate poems.)

Regarding the conception and diction of recent poets, even if it is a new phrase, one should be careful and leave it alone. (In regard to the poetry of those poets, one should never use the words from poems composed in the last seventy or eighty years.)

Poets frequently use and compose with the words of the poetry of the ancients. That already is a trend. But when using old poems and composing new poems, taking three out of the five measures [*ku*][103] is too much, and these poems will lack freshness. It is permissible to take three or four syllables more than two measures [*ku*]. However, it is too much if the content is the same and one uses words from old poems. (For example, using a foundation poem on flowers to compose on flowers or using a foundation poem on the moon to compose on the moon.) One should take a foundation poem on the seasons and compose on love or miscellaneous topics, or take a foundation poem on love and miscellaneous topics and compose on the four seasons. If done in this way, there probably will be no problems with borrowing from old poetry. . . .

103. There are five (5/7/5/7/7) measures (*ku*) in a thirty-one-syllable waka.

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One should always keep in mind the scene [*keiki*] of old poetry and let it sink deep into the heart. One should learn in particular from the *Kokinshū*, *The Tales of Ise*, *Gosenshū*, *Shūishū*, and from superior poets in the *Thirty-six Poets' Collection*. (Those who should come to mind from the *Thirty-six Poets' Collection* are Hitomaro, Ki no Tsurayuki, Tadamine, Ise, Ono no Komachi, and so on.)

Even if one is not a master of Japanese poetry, in order to understand the seasonal scenes, the ups and downs of the human world, and the essence of things, one should always be sure to absorb the first twenty volumes of *Bo Juyi's Collected Works*.[104] (These deeply resonate with Japanese poetry.)

Poetry has no master. One simply makes the old poems one's teacher. If one dyes one's heart in the old style and learns from the words of one's predecessors, who would not be able to learn to compose poetry? No one.

SHINKOKINSHŪ (*NEW COLLECTION OF ANCIENT AND MODERN POEMS*, CA. 1205)

The *Shinkokinwakashū*, better known as the *Shinkokinshū*, is an anthology of nearly two thousand Japanese poems (waka), all in the same standard prosodic form, thirty-one syllables in five measures. It was compiled and edited during the first two decades of the thirteenth century and was the eighth in what became a series of twenty-one anthologies of classical poetry created in response to an imperial edict, beginning with the *Kokinshū* (ca. 905) and ending with the *Shinshokukokinshū* (1439). Its title—literally, *New Collection of Ancient and Modern Poems* or *New Kokinshū*—implies that the *Shinkokinshū* was conceived and edited in calculated emulation of the first such imperially commissioned collection. The attempt to produce an anthology that would match, if not surpass, the achievements of the *Kokinshū* was widely deemed successful in the judgment of later generations. Its chronological scope is broader, not only because it postdates the *Kokinshū* by three centuries, but also because it includes poetry by authors of earlier periods deliberately excluded from the *Kokinshū*, and the range of styles encompassed is arguably richer. The question of which of these collections is superior, makes for better reading, or serves as a more reliable model for aspiring poets has been the subject of debate for several centuries and has not yet been resolved.

104. Seventy-one volumes in all, of which the first twenty are on Chinese poetry.

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Following the precedent of the *Kokinshū*, the *Shinkokinshū* has two prefaces, one in Sino-Japanese kanbun and one in kana. The poems are arranged by topics into twenty volumes. The topics or poetic themes of these books generally follow the conventions established by the *Kokinshū* but, in their details, are much closer to the precedent of the *Senzaishū* (1187), the seventh imperially commissioned anthology. In chronological order from one through twenty, the topics consist of two books on spring; one on summer; two on autumn; one on winter; one each on felicitations, mourning, parting, and travel; five on love; three of miscellany; and one each on poems on Shinto and Buddhist topics. Quantitatively, the emphasis is on seasonal poems and poems of love, the favored genres for public, formal poetic composition. But the *Shinkokinshū* allows for considerably more coverage, compared with the *Kokinshū*, of "miscellaneous" topics, which tend to consist of personal reflections on the contingencies of life. The typology of the *Shinkokinshū*'s twenty books was sufficient to encompass the entire range of topics considered suitable, as of the late twelfth century, for the composition of court poetry and thus gives a rough overview of how the world of poetic experience was partitioned at the time. Given the immense authority accorded to the *Kokinshū* in the construction of this world, even the less conspicuous departures from its precedent are significant. That is, the *Kokinshū* contains virtually no poetry on specifically Buddhist topics, and its few more or less explicitly Shinto-inspired poems are mainly in the two books of miscellany. Anagrammatic (*mono no na*) poems, which make up the entire tenth book of the *Kokinshū*, have disappeared. All the poems in variant prosody (*zōtai*) have been omitted as well.

In each of the twenty books, but most noticeably in the books of seasonal and love poems and those on miscellaneous topics, the compilers took great care to arrange their materials into clusters of poems on the same conventional topics, such as "Beginning of Autumn" (*risshū*, the first seventeen poems in the first book of autumn), with common images or motifs (in this instance, "Autumn Winds"). These clusters were often linked by word associations (*engo*) to adjacent clusters. The effect of this was a sense of progression, with intermittent digressions, through the phases of seasonal change or movement toward the inevitable disappointments of a courtly love affair. The subtleties of such patterns were complicated and sometimes undermined by efforts to alternate sequences of recent poems—the "modern" of the anthology's title—with those by "ancient" poets, and by deleting individual poems during the ultimately unfinished process of revising the anthology over many years.

Especially significant for appreciating the changes in the topography of decorum that the editors of the *Shinkokinshū* sought is the resulting exclusion of *haikai* (dissonant poems), which were included among poems of variant

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prosody (zōtai) in the *Kokinshū*.[105] The question raised by the exclusion of haikai from the *Shinkokinshū* is one of many about the designs of this collection's editors and, by extension, about the meaning of its title. Was the "renewal" of courtly poetic traditions suggested by its title meant to be a return to the origins, a restoration of the hallowed traditions of early court poetry, or an affirmation of new directions in poetic practice? Numerous and diverse answers have been proposed, but it is up to the reader to decide.

The poems translated here were selected from works by poets of the late twelfth century most prominently represented in the anthology, those who defined its distinctive aesthetic. As far as possible, the translations are literal in the sense that each word of the English answers to some word or wording of the Japanese. The poems are parsimonious in form and extravagant in sense, and if the English is ambiguous or occasionally obscure, it is (ideally) because the text is so to more or less the same degree. The poems achieve their depths and breadth through the exploitation of a received array of figures and an accepted vocabulary of connotations, as well as through techniques of punning (*kakekotoba*) and allusions to earlier classical poems (*honka-dori*) and subtexts (*honsetsu*), all of which made it possible for a single phrase or word to resonate well beyond its denotative sense. The commentary attempts to explicate some of what the poets presumably expected their readers to take for granted or recognize anew, supplies the *honka* (base poem) or *honsetsu* (subtext) in translation, and provides occasional citations from early commentaries or from the judgments of the poetry matches in which many of the poems originally were presented.

Spring 1

1

On the motif "Spring Begins."

Miyoshino wa	Fair Yoshino, mountains
yama mo kasumite	now wrapped in mist:
shirayuki no	to the village where snow

105. Haikai poems as represented in the *Kokinshū* are not, in fact, prosodically different from conventional waka but, rather, violate the aesthetic ideals of court poetry, lexically or thematically, through their use of archaic or "inelegant" diction, tendentious humor, or extravagant conceits—and thus they served by contraries to define the bounds of decorum. The exclusion of haikai is notable because even though Fujiwara no Shunzei, the sole editor of the *Senzaishū*, had demoted "poems in variant prosody" (*zōtai*), the topic of a separate book (no. 19) in the *Kokinshū*, to the subtitle of his third book of miscellany (*zōka*), he followed the precedent of the *Kokinshū* to the extent of including twenty-two haikai poems in his collection.

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furinishi sato ni was falling
haru wa kinikeri spring has come.[106]

The Regent Prime Minister[107]

3

When the poet presented a hundred-verse set of poems, a poem on "Spring."

yamafukami By a gate of pine
haru to mo shiranu in mountains too deep
matsu no to ni to know spring has come,
taedae kakaru one by one they fall,
yuki no tamamizu jewel drops of melting snow.[108]

Princess Shokushi[109]

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106. A poem on the topic *risshun* ("Spring Begins," the first day of spring by the solar calendar) became conventional for the opening of an imperial waka anthology. Yoshino, a mountainous area in Yamato and near the capital, was noted in poetry for deep snow as well as for cherry blossoms and autumn foliage. It was also the site of a seventh-century "detached" imperial palace, which qualified it for recognition as a former capital, acknowledged in the conventional phrase *furinishi sato* (literally, "old village"), with a pun on *furinishi* meaning "[snow] was falling." The imperial association, underscored by the laudative prefix *mi-* in *miyoshino*, may well have been one reason this poem was chosen for first place in the anthology, which was compiled under the attentive gaze of the retired emperor GoToba. The base text (*honka*) is the first poem from the third imperial anthology, *Shūishū:* "'Spring begins today'—is it only saying so that makes the snowy mountains of fair Yoshino look draped in mist, this morning?" (Mibu no Tadamine). Yoshitsune's poem affirms that indeed mist, an auspicious sign of spring, has replaced snow even in the cold mountains of Yoshino and that therefore spring has arrived in due time. It was the prerogative of the imperial household to issue the calendar, and the implicit moral responsibility of the emperor to ensure that the seasons followed it. Signs that they did so were taken as a cause for celebration.

107. Fujiwara no Yoshitsune (1169–1206). Born into an illustrious and powerful branch of the Fujiwara clan, Yoshitsune became regent–prime minister at the early age of thirty-six and then died under mysterious circumstances two years later. An enthusiastic and gifted poet, he used his position at court to patronize Teika and other major poets of the age and to sponsor numerous events, including the monumental Poetry Match in Six Hundred Rounds, a source of many poems for the *Shinkokinshū*. Seventy-four of his poems were included in the anthology.

108. Spring comes late to deep mountains: the first sign of its arrival here is the melting of winter snow rather than the appearance of mist. "Gate of pine" is a metonymy for a recluse's dwelling too remote from the capital to rely on an official calendar to announce the coming of spring, while the evergreen pines by their nature do not "know" and hence cannot inform the speaker of the change of seasons.

109. Princess Shokushi (d. 1201), the third daughter of Emperor GoShirakawa, studied poetry as a disciple of Shunzei, whose major treatise on waka, *Korai fūteishō*, was dedicated to her. She was admired as one of the most accomplished exponents of the *Shinkokinshū* style, and forty-nine of her poems were included in the anthology, more than for any other female poet.

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4

For a fifty-verse set of poems composed for presentation to the retired emperor.

kakikurashi	Cloud darkened,
nao furusato no	this ancient village:
yuki no uchi ni	in falling snow
ato koso miene	not a trace of spring,
haru wa kinikeri	yet surely it has come.[110]

Kunaikyō[111]

23

On the topic "Lingering Cold," for a hundred-verse poetry match at the poet's residence.

sora wa nao	Under skies still
kasumi mo yarazu	awaiting mist,
kaze saete	the wind chills
yukige ni kumoru	a spring night's moon
haru no yo no tsuki	hiding in snow-fraught clouds.[112]

The Regent Prime Minister

24

At the Bureau of Poetry, on the motif "Spring Mountain Moon."

yama fukami	In mountains deep
nao kage samushi	a spring moon's light

---

110. Snow is still falling from a sky darkened with clouds, and if spring personified has indeed made its way to this village, the tracks it should have left are covered in fresh snowfall and darkness. No visible evidence supports the poet's confidence in the arrival of the season. None is needed: winter must yield to convention and let the calendar prevail.

111. Kunaikyō (c. 1185–1204?). Her earliest recorded poems are those presented in a poetry match sponsored by the retired emperor Go'Toba in 1200, when she was fourteen or fifteen, and during the next five years she enjoyed a reputation as a leading adept of intricately wrought and complexly allusive poems in the *Shinkokinshū* style. Legend had it that her death at the age of nineteen or twenty was caused by intense concentration on poetic composition. Fifteen of her poems were included in the anthology.

112. The poetry match of the headnote, completed in 1194, has come to be known as the Poetry Match in Six Hundred Rounds. It was sponsored by the author of this poem, the regent–prime minister Fujiwara no Yoshitsune, and was a major source of poems for this collection. Instead of the longed-for mist of early spring, it is snow-laden clouds that obscure the light of the moon.

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haru no tsuki	still cold—
sora kakikumori	the sky thickens with clouds
yuki wa furitsutsu	as snow falls and falls.[113]

Echizen

25

On the topic "Spring Vista at a Waterside Village," when Japanese poems were matched with poems in Chinese.

Mishima-e ya	By the Bay of Mishima
shimo mo mada hinu	even as frost lingers
ashi no ha ni	spring winds
tsunogumu hodo no	call forth new shoots
harukaze zo fuku	from withered reeds.[114]

Michiteru

26

On the topic "Spring Vista at a Waterside Village," when Japanese poems were matched with poems in Chinese.

yūzukuyo	Evening of a new moon—
shio michikuru rashi	the tide must be rising
Naniwa-e no	in the Bay of Naniwa:
ashi no wakaba ni	over the young shoots of reeds
koyuru shiranami	crests of white waves.[115]

Hidetō

36

When some courtiers were making verses in Chinese and matching poems to them, a poem on "Water."

miwataseba	Gazing out over
yamamoto kasumu	mist-shrouded foothills
Minasegawa	beyond the river Minase,

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113. The poet has opted to address the nominal topic of this poem, "Spring Mountain Moon," with imagery—moonlight chilled by snow clouds—drawing the poem into alignment with the formal topic of the previous poem, "Lingering Cold."

114. The topic of this poem breaks away from the previous two. The link is maintained by contrasts: a shift from mountain depths to seaside village, snow replaced by frost, and chill winds by those proper to the season.

115. The budding reed-shoots of the previous poem are now leaved in green as frost becomes froth. The contrast of green against white underscores the progression from lingering cold to early spring proper.

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yūbe wa aki to	who could have thought
nani omoiken	evenings are autumn?[116]

The Retired Emperor GoToba

37

For a poetry match at the residence of the regent prime minister, on the motif "Spring Dawn."

kasumi tatsu	Mist rises over
Sue no Matsuyama	Far Pine Mountain—
honobono to	faintly aglow,
nami ni hanaruru	a sky of drifting clouds
yokogumo no sora	parts from the waves.[117]

Fujiwara no Ietaka[118]

38

For a fifty-verse set of poems composed at the request of the cloistered Prince Shukaku.

haru no yo no	A spring night's
yume no ukihashi	floating bridge of dreams
todaeshite	breaks:

---

116. This spring poem alludes to and challenges the famous assertion in Sei Shōnagon's *Pillow Book* that evening is the most poignant moment of an autumn day and thus best appreciated in that season. Compare nos. 361 and 363. The broader context is a timeless debate over which season, spring or autumn, is aesthetically more interesting.

117. "Far Pine Mountain" (Sue no Matsuyama) is an *utamakura*, a place-name with well-defined poetic connotations. This one is traditionally identified with Michinoku, in northeastern Honshū. It first appeared in an anonymous folk song in the *Kokinshū* that may be paraphrased as "Should I ever set you aside and let my heart stray, then might the waves surge over Far Pine Mountain," implying that the former is as improbable as the latter and, in turn, that Far Pine Mountain rises near the shore well above sea level on the coast in Michinoku. As so many later poets did, Karyū imagined conditions under which the impossible takes place as waves of mist rise over the mountain at dawn. This poem shares with the previous few poems the season word "mist" but begins a new sequence of three poems on the topic *akebono* (spring dawn).

118. Ietaka (or Karyū, 1158–1237) became a disciple of Shunzei at about the age of twenty and soon was recognized for his technical expertise in what was to become known as the "*Shinkokinshū* style." Several of his most admired poems are paired with Teika's in the anthology, underscoring the impression that he was acknowledged by Teika as a rival and predecessor. He was one of the four chief compilers of the anthology, in which forty-three of his poems were included.

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58

For the hundred-verse poetry match at the regent prime minister's residence.

ima wa tote	The wild geese in the field,
tanomu no kari mo	knowing it's time to leave,
uchiwabinu	cry plaintively:
oborozukiyo no	mist-shrouded moon
akebono no sora	lingering in the dawn sky.[123]

Priest Jakuren

Spring 2

133

For a picture of Mount Yoshino on a sliding screen panel at Saishōshitennō-in.

Miyoshino no	Flowers must be falling
takane no sakura	on Yoshino's peaks:
chirinikeri	this spring dawn's
arashimo shiroki	gusting winds
haru no akebono	blossom in white.[124]

The Retired Emperor GoToba

134

For the Poetry Match in Fifteen Hundred Rounds.

sakurairo no	Of winds of spring in my garden
niwa no harukaze	of the color of cherry blossoms
ato mo nashi	not a trace, nor visitor

---

123. This verse was composed on the topic "Spring Dawn," but the editors have taken advantage of the season words *oborozukiyo* (mist-shrouded moon) and *kari* (wild geese) to place the poem here as a link between a sequence of poems on the former and latter topics in turn. Regretting that the moon lingering at dawn must depart from the sky, the speaker takes the cries of the geese readying to depart for the north as empathetic with his own feelings, perhaps also taking the departing moon as emblematic of the geese's plight.

124. Lines 1 and 2 in the translation offer a rational inference—that the cherry blossoms at the peaks of Yoshino must be falling—to explain something seemingly irrational: the startling image of white wind blowing down to the foot of the mountain. Yoshino was famous for both its relatively steep mountains and its cherry blossoms.

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nakarikeri	pine trees
maki tatsu yama no	on a darkening mountain
aki no yūgure	evening of autumn.[128]

Priest Jakuren

363

For a hundred-verse set of poems composed at the suggestion of Priest Saigyō.

miwataseba	Looking out across
hana mo momiji mo	the shore
nakarikeri	no flowers, no autumn leaves:
ura no tomaya no	a thatched hut's
aki no yūgure	evening of autumn.[129]

Fujiwara no Teika

380

When the poet presented a hundred-verse set of poems, a poem on "The Moon."

nagame-wabinu	Gazing till weary of these skies
aki yori hoka no	I long for a dwelling
yado mogana	away from autumn:
no ni mo yama ni mo	must the moon light
tsuki ya sumuran	every field and mountain?[130]

Princess Shokushi

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128. This belongs to a series of ten poems on the topic "Autumn Evening" and is the first of three in particular that later became known as the famous *sanseki* (three evening poems) by Jakuren, Saigyō, and Teika, respectively. As of the twelfth century and after, this topic was considered especially challenging because the compound appeal of the season and of evening or dusk made it difficult to do justice to the topic, and it was especially difficult to do so inventively. Jakuren's poem has been the subject of much interpretive debate. As do many poems of this era, it consists of an abstract assertion followed by a concrete observation with a *soku* (distanced link) relation between the first three and last two measures, a logical or rhetorical gap the reader is forced to explore. Evergreen trees seem impervious to the coming of autumn, but as dusk consumes the light, they fade into a monochrome perfectly consonant with the mood of an autumn evening.

129. The logic of this most famous of Teika's poems has affinities with Jakuren's preceding poem. In rejecting the familiar emblems of seasonal beauty—spring flowers and autumn foliage—in favor of a monochrome scene containing only a humble cottage by the shore, the poem has been taken to anticipate the minimalist aesthetics of *sabi* and *wabi*, associated later with the way of tea and the poetics of Shinkei and Bashō, among many others. Teika himself did not seem to consider this a particularly memorable poem and included it in neither *Teika hachidaishō* nor *Hyakuban jika-awase*, which include those poems he seemed most interested in preserving.

130. The base poem (honka) for this composition is Sosei, *Kokinshū*, no. 947: "Where might I find distaste for this world? In pastures and hills alike my heart yearns to stray." Sosei's poem,

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419

When the poet had a fifty-verse set of poems on "The Moon" composed for delivery at his residence.

tsuki dani mo	Heedless that the moon
nagusamegataki	brings sadness enough
aki no yo no	to this autumn night,
kokoro mo shiranu	the wind
matsu no kaze kana	sighs in the pines.[131]

The Regent Prime Minister

420

When the regent prime minister had a fifty-verse set of poems on "The Moon" composed for delivery at his residence.

samushiro ya	On a mat of rush
matsu yo no aki no	as autumn winds deepen
kaze fukete	her night of waiting,
tsuki o katashiku	the Maiden of Uji Bridge
Uji no Hashihime	spreads a robe of moonlight.[132]

Fujiwara no Teika

Winter

671

When the poet presented a hundred-verse set of poems.

koma tomete	No shelter to rest my horse
uchiharau	or brush my sleeves,
kage mo nashi	not a shadow

---

partly by its placement in the *Kokinshū*, Miscellaneous, book 2, clearly implies the familiar ethical dilemma of a Buddhist ascetic seeking to leave the world. That nuance is attenuated by the placement of Princess Shokushi's poem here in the first book of autumn. The speaker's "weariness" is due to the aesthetic conflict between the moon and the season of autumn in which it "dwells" (and shines most clearly, by the pun on *sumu*) or between beauty and sadness.

131. The logic of this verse places it in a category of conceit much favored by *Shinkokinshū* poets: as though X were not enough, here is the moon, or the wind, or the crying birds or insects, to bring something more.

132. This is an example of Teika's ability to combine the techniques of ellipsis, verbal association, and allusion with strongly inventive figural language. The *honka* (base poem) is an anonymous love poem in the *Kokinshū*, no. 689: "Spreading her robe on a mat of rush, will she await me again tonight—the Maiden of Uji Bridge?" *Aki no kaze* (autumn's wind) retains—from the honka—the conventional metaphorical sense of fading or sated passion, inevitably called forth by the phrase *matsu yo* (night of waiting). Allusive variation was usually expected to begin from a displacement across topical categories, as here from love to autumn. This poem was regarded as an example of Teika's so-called new-fangled, unfounded Daruma (Zen) style, which provoked such anxiety among conservative critics.

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Sano no watari no	at Sano Crossing
yuki no yūgure	in snow falling dusk.[133]

Fujiwara no Teika

Mourning

788

In the autumn of the year his mother died, on a day of windstorms, the poet went to the place where he had once lived with his mother.

tamayura no	Not fleeting drops
tsuyu mo namida mo	of dew nor tears will pause:
todomarazu	winds of autumn
nakihito kouru	sweep the dwelling
yado no akikaze	loved by one now gone.

Fujiwara no Teika

Travel

939

For a fifty-verse set of poems composed for presentation [to the retired emperor].

akeba mata	Yet another mountain peak
koyubeki yama no	to be crossed after dawn?
mine nareya	White clouds touched

133. The poem, one of Teika's most admired, becomes fully intelligible only when the reader recalls the base poem in the *Man'yōshū*, vol. 3, no. 265: "How dismal this endless rain at Sano Crossing in Miwa no Saki, no trace of a house that might offer shelter." Apart from the poetic place-name, Sano Crossing, none of the language of the base poem is introduced into Teika's poem, and the season is changed (from autumn to winter and rain into snow). The primary connotation of the place-name, judging from a contemporary poetic lexicon, was "desolation," signified by the absence of dwellings (the base poem is evidently the source of this association). Teika's poem evokes the connotation with the phrase *kage mo nashi* (not a shadow), which in the context implies the absence of any building to cast a shadow (any shelter) but literally refers also to the setting: snowfall at dusk, a scene from which all shadow is, perforce, absent. The single most telling effect, however, is achieved by the absence in Teika's poem of any emotional or evaluative word, as found in the base poem. It was a rule of late classical poetics that such words were to be avoided: a well-wrought poem could evoke a feeling or mood without naming it. Teika usually follows this rule, and in this instance it enables him to alter the tone of his own poem to distinct advantage: what was merely privative (steady rainfall and no shelter = desolation) in the base poem is inverted to become an occasion for exalted contemplation (absence of shelter forces the speaker's attention toward the austere beauty of the setting).

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sorayuku tsuki no by the distant reach
sue no shirakumo of the setting moon.

Fujiwara no Ietaka

Love 1

1034

For a hundred-verse set of poems, on the topic "Love Endured."

tama no o yo If this jewel thread of life
taenaba taene is to break, let it break:
nagaraeba living on
shinoburu koto no would be to endure
yowari mo zo suru love's torment alone.[134]

Princess Shokushi

1035

For a hundred-verse set of poems, on the topic "Love Endured."

wasurete wa Another evening's sighs:
uchinagekaruru have I forgotten
yūbe kana this hidden longing
ware nomi shirite is mine alone to suffer
suguru tsukibi o as days become months?[135]

Princess Shokushi

Love 2

1136

Among the poems for the Minase-koi Poetry Match on fifteen topics, on the motif "Spring Love."

omokage no My loved one's image
kasumeru tsuki zo shimmers in the misted moon
yadorikeru of a spring now past

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134. *Tama no o* (literally, "a thread of beads or jewels") was a familiar periphrasis for "(human) life." Words linked to "thread . . . break" (*tae*) and "living on" (*nagarae*, or "extend, endure") help invigorate the cliché.

135. This poem is based closely on Ki no Tsurayuki, *Kokinshū*, no. 606: "Keeping this longing hidden within is what hurts—with only me to hear my sighs."

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AN ACCOUNT OF A TEN-FOOT-SQUARE HUT (*HŌJŌKI*, 1212)

Chōmei wrote *An Account of a Ten-Foot-Square Hut* at the end of the Third Month of 1212 while in retirement at Hino, in the hills southeast of Kyoto. It is written in a mixed Japanese–Chinese style that draws heavily on Chinese and Buddhist words and sources. Probably the most noticeable rhetorical feature of this style is the heavy use of parallel phrases and of metaphors. The work is noted for its vivid descriptions of a series of disasters in the capital during a time of turmoil (the war between the Taira and Minamoto at the end of the twelfth century) and for its description of the law of impermanence of all things, one of the central tenets of Buddhism, which had a profound impact on Japan at this time. As a recluse who retreats from society and turns toward the pursuit of the Pure Land, a western paradise envisioned by the Pure Land Buddhist sect, the author is representative of a larger movement among the cultural elite at this time. In the end, however, Chōmei finds himself in the paradoxical position of advocating detachment and rebirth in the Pure Land while at the same time becoming attached to the beauties of nature and the four seasons and the aesthetic life of his ten-foot-square hut at Hino.

The current of the flowing river does not cease, and yet the water is not the same water as before. The foam that floats on stagnant pools, now vanishing, now forming, never stays the same for long. So, too, it is with the people and dwellings of the world. In the capital, lovely as if paved with jewels, houses of the high and low, their ridges aligned and roof tiles contending, never disappear however many ages pass, and yet if we examine whether this is true, we will rarely find a house remaining as it used to be. Perhaps it burned down last year and has been rebuilt. Perhaps a large house has crumbled and become a small one. The people living inside the houses are no different. The place may be the same capital and the people numerous, but only one or two in twenty or thirty is someone I knew in the past. One will die in the morning and another will be born in the evening: such is the way of the world, and in this we are like the foam on the water. I know neither whence the newborn come nor whither go the dead. For whose sake do we trouble our minds over these temporary dwellings, and why do they delight our eyes? This, too, I do not understand. In competing for impermanence, dweller and dwelling are no different from the morning glory and the dew. Perhaps the dew will fall and the blossom linger. But even though it lingers, it will wither in the morning sun. Perhaps the blossom will wilt and the dew remain. But even though it remains, it will not wait for evening.

In the more than forty springs and autumns that have passed since I began to understand the nature of the world, I have seen many unexpected things. I think it was on the twenty-eighth of the Fourth Month of Angen 3 [1177]. Around eight o'clock on a windy, noisy night, a fire broke out in the southeastern part of the capital and spread to the northwest. Finally it reached Suzaku Gate, the

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heard, Kyoto was established as the capital more than four hundred years ago, during the reign of the Saga emperor.[141] The relocation of the capital is not something that can be undertaken easily, for no special reason, and so it is only natural that the people were uneasy with this move and lamented together about it. Objections having no effect, however, the emperor, the ministers, and all the other high nobles moved. Of those who served at court, who would stay behind in the old capital? Those who vested their hopes in government appointments or in rank, or depended on the favor of their masters, wasted not a day in moving, while those who had missed their chance, who had been left behind by the world, and who had nothing to look forward to, stayed sorrowfully where they were. Dwellings, their eaves contending, went to ruin with the passing days. Houses were disassembled and floated down the Yodo River as the land turned into fields before one's eyes. Men's hearts changed; now they valued only horses and saddles. No one used oxen and carriages any more. People coveted property in the southwest and scorned manors in the northeast. At that time I had occasion to go to the new capital, in the province of Tsu. I saw that there was insufficient room to lay out a grid of streets and avenues, the area being small. To the north, the city pressed against the mountains and, to the south, dropped off toward the sea. The roar of waves never slackened; a violent wind blew in off the saltwater. The palace stood in the mountains. Did that hall of logs look like this?[142] It was novel and, in its way, elegant. Where did they erect the houses they had torn down day by day and brought downstream, constricting the river's flow? Open land was still plentiful, houses few. Even though the old capital had become a wasteland, the new capital was yet unfinished. Everyone felt like the drifting clouds. Those who had lived here before complained about losing their land. Those who had newly moved here bemoaned the pains of construction. In the streets, I saw that those who should have used carriages rode on horses, and most of those who should have dressed in court robes and headgear wore simple robes instead. The ways of the capital had changed abruptly; now they were no different from the ways of rustic samurai. I heard that these developments were portents of disorder in the land, and it turned out to be so: day by day the world grew more unsettled and the people more uneasy, and their fears proved to be well founded, so that in the winter of the same year the court returned to this capital.[143] But what became of all the houses that had been torn down? Not all of them were rebuilt as they had stood before.

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141. It was Emperor Kanmu (r. 781–806) who actually relocated the capital from Nagaoka to Heian-kyō (Kyoto), in 794. Perhaps Chōmei saw the failed attempt to return the capital to the former capital, Nara—in 810, during the reign of Emperor Saga (r. 809–823)—as serving to establish the capital at Kyoto once and for all.

142. Empress Saimei (r. 655–661) built a temporary palace of logs in Kyushu in 661.

143. The people's fears were realized when Minamoto no Yoritomo raised an army in the Eighth Month of 1180.

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intact. Some fell apart; others toppled over. Dust and ash rose like billows of smoke. The sound of the earth's movement and of houses collapsing was no different from thunder. People who were inside their houses might be crushed in a moment. Those who ran outside found the earth splitting asunder. Lacking wings, one could not fly into the sky. If one were a dragon, one would ride the clouds. I knew then that earthquakes were the most terrible of all the many terrifying things. The dreadful shaking stopped after a time, but the aftershocks continued. Not a day passed without twenty or thirty quakes strong enough to startle one under ordinary circumstances. As ten and twenty days elapsed, gradually the intervals grew longer—four or five a day, then two or three, one every other day, one in two or three days—but the aftershocks went on for perhaps three months. Of the four great elements, water, fire, and wind constantly bring disaster, but for its part, earth normally brings no calamity. In ancient times—was it during the Saikō era [855]?—there was a great earthquake and many terrible things occurred, such as the head falling from the Buddha at Tōdai Temple,[151] but, they say, even that was not as bad at this. Everyone spoke of futility, and the delusion in their hearts seemed to diminish a little at the time; but after days and months piled up and years went by, no one gave voice to such thoughts any longer.

All in all, life in this world is difficult; the fragility and transience of our bodies and dwellings are indeed as I have said. We cannot reckon the many ways in which we trouble our hearts according to where we live and in obedience to our status. He who is of trifling rank but lives near the gates of power cannot rejoice with abandon, however deep his happiness may be, and when his sorrow is keen, he does not wail aloud. Anxious about his every move, trembling with fear no matter what he does, he is like a sparrow near a hawk's nest. One who is poor yet lives beside a wealthy house will grovel in and out, morning and evening, ashamed of his wretched figure. When he sees the envy that his wife, children, and servants feel for the neighbors, when he hears the rich family's disdain for him, his mind will be unsettled and never find peace. He who lives in a crowded place cannot escape damage from a fire nearby. He who lives outside the city contends with many difficulties as he goes back and forth and often suffers at the hands of robbers. The powerful man is consumed by greed; he who stands alone is mocked. Wealth brings many fears; poverty brings cruel hardship. Look to another for help and you will belong to him. Take someone under your wing, and your heart will be shackled by affection. Bend to the ways of the world and you will suffer. Bend not and you will look demented. Where can one live, and how can one behave to shelter this body briefly and to ease the heart for a moment?

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151. Tōdai Temple is one of the seven great Nara temples and served as the head of the national temple system instituted in Nara times. It is famous for its large statue of Vairocana Buddha, known popularly as the Great Buddha.

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I inherited my paternal grandmother's house and occupied it for some time. Then I lost my backing,[152] came down in the world, and even though the house was full of fond memories, I finally could live there no longer,[153] and so I, past the age of thirty, resolved to build a hut. It was only one-tenth the size of my previous residence. Unable to construct a proper estate, I erected a house only for myself.[154] I managed to build an earthen wall but lacked the means to raise a gate. Using bamboo posts, I sheltered my carriage. The place was not without its dangers whenever snow fell or the wind blew. Because the house was located near the riverbed, the threat of water damage was deep and the fear of robbers never ebbed. Altogether, I troubled my mind and endured life in this difficult world for more than thirty years. The disappointments I suffered during that time awakened me to my unfortunate lot.[155] Accordingly, when I greeted my fiftieth spring, I left my house and turned away from the world. I had no wife or children, and so there were no relatives whom it would have been difficult to leave behind. As I had neither office nor stipend, what was there for me to cling to? Vainly, I spent five springs and autumns living in seclusion among the clouds on Mount Ōhara.[156]

Reaching the age of sixty, when I seemed about to fade away like the dew, I constructed a new shelter for the remaining leaves of my life. I was like a traveler who builds a lodging for one night only or like an aged silkworm spinning its cocoon. The result was less than a hundredth the size of the residence of my middle age. In the course of things, years have piled up and my residences have steadily shrunk. This one is like no ordinary house. In area it is only ten feet square; in height, less than seven feet. Because I do not choose a particular place to live, I do not acquire land on which to build. I lay a foundation, put up a simple, makeshift roof, and secure each joint with a latch. This is so that I can easily move the building if anything dissatisfies me. How much bother can it be to reconstruct it? It fills only two carts, and there is no expense beyond payment for the porters.

Now, having hidden my tracks and gone into seclusion in the depths of Mount Hino,[157] I extended the eaves more than three feet to the east, making a convenient place to break and burn brushwood. On the south I made a

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152. Chōmei is probably referring to the death of his father, in 1172 or 1173.

153. Suō Naishi, *Kin'yōshū*, no. 581: "I cannot live here any longer, and I leave: like the grass of remembrance growing thickly at the eaves, this dwelling is lush with fond memories."

154. A proper estate would have included guest quarters, storehouses, and other outbuildings.

155. Chōmei's family were hereditary priests of the Tadasu Shrine, part of the Shimogamo complex of Shinto shrines, just north of the capital. His greatest disappointment seems to have been his failure to succeed to this position.

156. Chōmei implies that these five years were vain because even though he had taken Buddhist vows, he had not made any progress toward enlightenment. Ōhara lies to the north of the capital.

157. Southeast of the capital, in what is now Fushimi Ward, Kyoto.

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bamboo veranda, on the west of which I built a water-shelf for offerings to the Buddha, and to the north, behind a screen, I installed a painting of Amida Buddha,[158] next to it hung Fugen,[159] and before it placed the Lotus Sutra. Along the east side I spread soft ferns, making a bed for the night. In the southwest, I constructed hanging shelves of bamboo and placed there three black leather trunks. In them I keep selected writings on Japanese poetry and music, and the *Essentials of Salvation*. A koto and a biwa stand to one side. They are what are called a folding koto and a joined lute.[160] Such is the state of my temporary hut. As for the location: to the south is a raised bamboo pipe. Piling up stones, I let water collect there. Because the woods are near, kindling is easy to gather. The name of the place is Toyama. Vines cover all tracks.[161] Although the ravines are overgrown, the view is open to the west. The conditions are not unfavorable for contemplating the Pure Land of the West. In spring I see waves of wisteria. They glow in the west like lavender clouds. In summer I hear the cuckoo. Whenever I converse with him, he promises to guide me across the mountain path of death.[162] In autumn the voices of twilight cicadas fill my ears. They sound as though they are mourning this ephemeral, locust-shell world. In winter I look with deep emotion upon the snow. Accumulating and melting, it can be compared to the effects of bad karma. When I tire of reciting the Buddha's name or lose interest in reading the sutras aloud, I rest as I please, I dawdle as I like. There is no one to stop me, no one before whom to feel ashamed. Although I have taken no vow of silence, I live alone and so surely can avoid committing transgressions of speech.[163] Although I do not go out of my way to observe the rules that an ascetic must obey, what could lead me to break them, there being no distractions here? In the morning, I might gaze at the ships sailing to and from Okanoya, comparing myself to the whitecaps behind them,

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158. It was believed that Amida Buddha presided over the Pure Land paradise to the west, where anyone who sought refuge in him by reciting his name would be reborn. Amida was thought to ride on lavender clouds when he came from his Pure Land to receive the dying.

159. The Fugen bodhisattva (Sk. Samantabhadra) is often shown seated on an elephant with six tusks, symbolizing the slow, steady progress with which one moves toward enlightenment.

160. The koto could be folded up, and the biwa (lute) disassembled, making them portable.

161. Although Chōmei uses "Toyama" as a proper noun here, the word also denotes "outer mountains," or slopes near town, as opposed to "deep mountains" (*miyama*). The association of *toyama* with vines (*masaki no kazura*) derives from Anonymous, *Kokinshū*, no. 1077: "Deep in the mountains hail must be falling. Vines on the outer mountains have turned red."

162. Chōmei alludes to an exchange between the Horikawa lady and the monk Saigyō (1118–1190). From the lady, *Sankashū*, no. 750; *Gyokuyōshū*, no. 2809: "Let us speak together now, in this world, and make a vow oh cuckoo—be my guide on the mountain path of death." Saigyō's reply, *Sankashū*, no. 751: "The weeping cuckoo will sing to keep his vow with you if you set out upon the mountain path of death."

163. Underlying this and the next two sentences is the Buddhist tradition of ascetic practice aimed at achieving correct action in speech, body, and mind. Chōmei suggests that because of his way of life, he cannot help but act correctly.

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and compose verses in the elegant style of the novice-priest Manzei;[164] in the evening, when the wind rustles the leaves of the *katsura* trees, I might turn my thoughts to the Xunyang River and play my biwa in the way of Gen Totoku.[165] If my enthusiasm continues unabated, I might accompany the sound of the pines with "Autumn Winds" or play "Flowing Spring" to the sound of the water.[166] Although I have no skill in these arts, I do not seek to please the ears of others. Playing to myself, singing to myself, I simply nourish my own mind.

At the foot of the mountain is another brushwood hut, the home of the caretaker of this mountain. A small child lives there. Now and then he comes to visit. When I have nothing else to do, I take a walk with him as my companion. He is ten years old; I am sixty. Despite the great difference in our ages, our pleasure is the same. Sometimes we pluck edible reed-flowers, pick pearberries, break off yam bulbils, or gather parsley. Sometimes we go to the paddies at the foot of the mountain, collect fallen ears of rice, and tie them into sheaves. If the weather is fair, we climb to the peak and gaze at the distant sky above my former home, or look at Mount Kohata, the villages of Fushimi, Toba, and Hatsukashi. Because a fine view has no master,[167] nothing interferes with our pleasure. When walking is no problem and we feel like going somewhere far, we follow the ridges from here, crossing Mount Sumi, passing Kasatori, and visit the temple at Iwama or worship at the Ishiyama temple. Then again, we might make our way across Awazu Plain and go to see the site where Semimaru lived, or cross the Tanakami River and visit the grave of Sarumaru Dayū.[168] On our return, depending on the season, we break off branches of blossoming cherry, seek out autumn foliage, pick ferns, or gather fruit. Some we offer to the Buddha, and some we bring home to remind us of our outing. When the night is quiet, I look at the moon at the window and think fondly of my old friends;[169] I hear the cries of the monkey and wet my sleeve with tears.[170] Fireflies

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164. Okanoya was on the east bank of the Uji River, in what is now the city of Uji. Manzei (or Mansei), a poet who took Buddhist vows in 721, is best remembered for the waka to which Chōmei alludes: *Shūishū*, no. 1327: "To what shall I compare the world? Whitecaps behind a ship that rows out at dawn."

165. The Xunyang River is in Jiangxi Province, China, where the poet Bo Juyi (772–846) wrote his famous *Biwa Song*. Gen Totoku (Minamoto no Tsunenobu, 1016–1097), poet and musician and founder of the Katsura school of biwa playing, lived in the village of Katsura, southwest of the capital.

166. "Autumn Winds" is a well-known piece of court music. "Flowing Spring" is a biwa composition reserved for specially initiated musicians.

167. Bo Juyi, *Wakan rōeishū*, no. 492: "A fine view has no particular master. Mountains belong to those who love mountains."

168. Semimaru, said to have been a blind lutenist, and Sarumaru Dayū were early Heian poets to whom many legends have attached. "Tanakami" refers to the upper reaches of the Uji River.

169. Bo Juyi, *Wakan rōeishū*, no. 242: "On the fifteenth night, the glow of a new moon. Two thousand miles away, the heart of my friend."

170. It was a convention of Chinese poetry that monkey cries are sad.

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in the grass might be taken for fishing flares at distant Maki Island; the rain at dawn sounds like a gale blowing the leaves of the trees. When I hear the pheasant's song I wonder whether it might not be the voice of my father or mother;[171] when the deer from the ridge draws tamely near I know how far I have withdrawn from the world.[172] Sometimes I dig up embers to keep me company when, as old men do, I waken in the night. This is not a fearful mountain, and so I listen closely to the owl's call.[173] Thus from season to season the charms of mountain scenery are never exhausted. Of course one who thinks and understands more deeply than I would not be limited to these.

When I came to live in this place, I thought that I would stay for only a short time, but already five years have passed. Gradually my temporary hut has come to feel like home as dead leaves lie deep on the eaves and moss grows on the foundation. When news of the capital happens to reach me, I learn that many of high rank have passed away since I secluded myself on this mountain. There is no way to know how many of lower rank have died. How many houses have been lost in the frequent fires? Only a temporary hut is peaceful and free of worry. It may be small, but it has a bed on which to lie at night and a place in which to sit by day. Nothing is lacking to shelter one person. The hermit crab prefers a small shell. This is because he knows himself. The osprey lives on rugged shores. The reason is that he fears people. I am like them. Knowing myself and knowing the world, I have no ambitions, I do not strive. I simply seek tranquillity and enjoy the absence of care. It is common practice in the world that people do not always build dwellings for themselves. Some might build for their wives and children, their relations and followers, some for their intimates and friends. Some might build for their masters or teachers, even for valuables, oxen, and horses. I now have built a hut for myself. I do not build for others. The reason is that given the state of the world now and my own circumstances, there is neither anyone I should live with and look after, nor any dependable servant. Even if I had built a large place, whom would I shelter, whom would I have live in it?

When it comes to friends, people respect the wealthy and prefer the suave. They do not always love the warmhearted or the upright. Surely it is best simply to make friends with strings and woodwinds, blossoms and the moon. When it comes to servants, they value a large bonus and generous favors. They do not seek to be nurtured and loved, to work quietly and at ease. It is best simply to make my body my servant. How? If there is something to be done, I use my own body. This can be a nuisance, but it is easier than employing and looking

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171. The priest Gyōki (Gyōgi), *Gyokuyōshū*, no. 2627: "When I hear the voice of the pheasant singing I think—is it my father? is it my mother?"

172. Saigyō, *Sankashū*, no. 1207; *Gyokuyōshū*, no. 2240: "Deep in the mountains the deer draws tamely near and I know how far I have withdrawn from the world."

173. Saigyō, *Sankashū*, no. 1203: "Deep in the mountains there are no friendly birdsongs—the fearful call of the owl."

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after someone else. If I have to go out, I walk. This can be painful, but it is not as bad as troubling my mind over the horse, the saddle, the ox, the carriage. Now I divide my single body and use it in two ways. My hands are my servants, my legs my conveyance, and they do just as I wish. Because my mind understands my body's distress, I rest my body when it feels distressed, use it when it feels strong. [And] though I use it, I do not overwork it. When my body does not want to work, my mind is not annoyed. Needless to say, walking regularly and working regularly must promote good health. How can I idle the time away doing nothing? To trouble others is bad karma. Why should I borrow the strength of another? It is the same for clothing and food. Using what comes to hand, I cover my skin with clothing woven from the bark of wisteria vines and with a hempen quilt, and sustain my life with asters of the field and fruits of the trees on the peak. Because I do not mingle with others, I am not embarrassed by my appearance. Because food is scarce, my crude rewards taste good. My description of these pleasures is not directed at the wealthy. I am comparing my own past only with my present.

The Three Worlds exist only in the one mind.[174] If the mind is not at peace, elephants, horses, and the Seven Rarities will be worthless; palaces and pavilions will have no appeal. My present dwelling is a lonely, one-room hut, but I love it. When I happen to venture into the capital, I feel ashamed of my beggarly appearance, but when I come back and stay here, I pity those others who rush about in the worldly dust. Should anyone doubt what I am saying, I would ask them to look at the fishes and birds. A fish never tires of water. One who is not a fish cannot know a fish's mind.[175] Birds prefer the forest. One who is not a bird cannot know a bird's mind. The savor of life in seclusion is the same. Who can understand it without living it?

Well, now, the moon of my life span is sinking in the sky; the time remaining to me nears the mountaintops. Soon I shall set out for the darkness of the Three Paths.[176] About what should I complain at this late date? The essence of the Buddha's teachings is that we should cling to nothing. Loving my grass hut is wrong. Attachment to my quiet, solitary way of life, too, must interfere with my enlightenment. Why then do I go on spending precious time relating useless pleasures?

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174. Chōmei here echoes a basic tenet of Mahayana Buddhism, that the phenomena around us, lacking any independent, objective existence, exist only as concepts or distinctions constructed by our minds. His wording derives from a line in the Kegon (Sk. Avatamsaka) Sutra: "All things in the Three Worlds exist only in the one mind." "The Three Worlds" are the world of desire, the world of form, and the world of formlessness, a division of the universe according to the level of enlightenment reached by the beings who exist in each realm. Human beings exist in the world of desire.

175. *Zhuangzi*, "Autumn Floods": "Not being a fish, how can you know that the fish are happy?"

176. The Three Paths are Hells, the Animal Path, and the Path of Hungry Ghosts, into which human beings who had committed bad actions were thought to be reborn.

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Pondering this truth on a tranquil morning, just before dawn, I ask my mind: one leaves the world and enters the forest to cultivate the mind and practice the Way of the Buddha. In your case, however, although your appearance is that of a monk, your mind is clouded with desire. You have presumed to model your dwelling after none other than that of Vimalakirti,[177] but your adherence to the discipline fails even to approach the efforts of Suddhipanthaka.[178] Is this because poverty, a karmic retribution, torments your mind,[179] or is it that a deluded mind has deranged you? At that time, my mind had no reply. I simply set my tongue to work halfheartedly reciting the name of the compassionate Amida Buddha two or three times, and that is all.

The monk Ren'in wrote this late in the Third Month of Kenryaku 2 [1212],
at his hut on Toyama.[180]

[Translated by Anthony H. Chambers]

TALES OF AWAKENING
(*HOSSHINSHŪ*, CA. 1211)

Tales of Awakening, a collection of Buddhist *setsuwa*, or anecdotes, was edited by Kamo no Chōmei (1155?–1216), who also wrote the preface. It contains a little over a hundred stories set in Japan. According to the preface, the aim of the collection was to lead those like Chōmei, who were wandering in darkness, to salvation. As the title suggests, several of the stories are about awakening to the Buddhist truth (*hosshin*) and being reborn in the Pure Land. Some of the stories illustrate how and why the precepts of Buddhism are to be observed; others are about reclusion or the failure to be reborn in the Pure Land. Kamo no Chōmei's career as a writer peaked around 1212, when he wrote his noted essay *An Account of a Ten-Foot-Square Hut* and when he became even more deeply committed to Buddhism. In the following story about Rengejō, Chomei suggests, as he does in *An Account of a Ten-Foot-Square Hut*, that the key to salvation and rebirth in the Pure Land is just a single issue: one's prevailing spiritual state, particularly at the point of death. This position, in which the individual determines his or her fate, predates the type of Pure Land Buddhism advocated by Hōnen (1133–1212) and others that relies on the other and on the *nenbutsu*, intoning the Amida Buddha's name as an expression of faith in his power to save.

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177. Vimalakirti (J. Yuima), the central figure of the sutra named for him, was a wealthy townsman who achieved enlightenment without becoming a monk and who welcomed the bodhisattva Mañjuśrī (J. Monjūshiri) and thousands of followers in a humble room that in Chinese and Japanese tradition was ten feet square. In the sutra, Vimalakirti demonstrates the doctrine of nonduality by remaining silent when asked to explain it.

178. Suddhipanthaka was the most foolish of the Buddha's disciples, although in the end he, too, achieved enlightenment.

179. The passage has also been interpreted to mean, "Is it perhaps that you torment yourself as a result of your poverty?"

180. Ren'in is the name Chōmei received when he took Buddhist vows.

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Rengejō's Suicide by Drowning

Not long ago there lived a rather well known holy man named Rengejō. He was on friendly terms with the priest Tōren, who over the years had now and then had occasion to be helpful to him in one way or another.[181] This holy man, however, was now beginning to get on in years, and he spoke to Tōren, saying, "I now grow weaker with each passing year and have little doubt that my death is drawing near. As my most earnest wish is to pass away with a clear mind fully focused on rebirth in the Pure Land, I have resolved that I shall end my life by drowning myself while my mind is in a state of composure."[182]

Tōren was astonished to hear this and remonstrated with him, saying, "You mustn't do that! Your aim should be to devote yourself, if for even one more day, to accruing spiritual merit by reciting the nenbutsu, the name of the Amida Buddha. What you propose is the sort of thing the ignorant do!" But seeing that Rengejō was absolutely unbending in his determination, Tōren said, "Well, if you are this resolute, I suppose there is no stopping you. It may be that this was predestined by karma." And he worked together with Rengejō, helping him make various arrangements in preparation for death.

When the time came, they went to a stretch of the Katsura River where the water was deep, and Rengejō began reciting the nenbutsu in a loud voice and, after a time, submerged himself and sank to the bottom of the river. By this time, word about Rengejō's intentions had gotten around, and so many people were gathered there that it looked like market day. Their expressions of boundless admiration and sorrow for him went on for some time. Tōren was deeply grief-stricken. "And we'd known each other for so many years!" he lamented and returned home, fighting back the tears.

Some days after this, Tōren fell ill with a sickness that appeared to be the result of possession by some sort of malignant spirit. Those around him were

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181. No dates are available for the priest Tōren, but he is known to have been an esteemed waka poet, active in the capital in poetic circles during the 1160s and 1170s. Nothing is known about Rengejō, but the thirteenth-century historical chronicle *Skimmings One Hundred Times Tempered* (*Hyakurenshō*) mentions a similarly named Rengejō (with one character written differently) as the prime mover in a group of eleven clerics who drowned themselves in the Katsura River in September 1176, on the day of the equinoctial full moon.

182. The notion of the state of mind at the exact moment of death being a crucial factor in determining one's rebirth dates back to early Buddhism. Moreover, the Lotus Sutra, enormously influential in Japan, relates numerous laudatory tales of Buddhists who expressed their zeal by gestures such as setting themselves alight to make "human offering lamps" of their own bodies. Under the influence of the Lotus Sutra and such texts as Genshin's *Essentials of Salvation* (*Ōjō-yōshū*), the practice of deliberately taking one's own life while one's mental faculties were still clear gained considerable currency as a means of both ensuring a favorable rebirth and demonstrating one's spiritual commitment. By the late eleventh century, this kind of religious suicide, especially by drowning, had developed into a fad of sorts and at the same time had become the subject of some controversy.

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just beginning to sense that this was no ordinary illness, that something strange was going on, when the spirit manifested and identified itself, saying, "I am he who was once Rengejō." Tōren said, "I cannot believe that this is true. We were friends for many years, and to the very end I did nothing whatsoever to arouse your resentment. What's more, the level of your spiritual dedication was extraordinary, and your end was most exemplary. So why would you come here in this totally unexpected form?"

The spirit replied, "That's just it! Although you had tried so hard to stop me, I did not fully understand my own heart, and so I went and threw my life away. I wasn't particularly doing it for anybody else's sake, so I never imagined that when it came down to it I might have a change of heart; but through whatever trick of Tenma, at the very moment when I was about to enter the water I was suddenly assailed by misgivings.[183] But with all those people there, how could I just feel free to change my mind? 'Ah, if only you would try to stop me *now*!' I thought, attempting to catch your eye; but as your face gave no indication of noticing, it seemed as though you were urging me, 'Now, hurry up and get on with it!' so I felt compelled to submerge myself—and in my bitterness at that, my mind held no thought whatsoever of Pure Land rebirth. Now I find myself in a rebirth that I had not bargained for at all. This was my own foolish error, so I have no business blaming anyone else for it; but because my final thought was of unwillingness to go, I have ended up coming back here like this."

Now this affair may indeed be a matter of karmic seeds sown in a previous existence. Yet it still ought to serve as a warning to the people of this degenerate age. The hearts of others are difficult to fathom and are not always motivated by attitudes that are pure and honest. Caught up in competitiveness and ambition or driven by pride and jealousy, some foolishly believe that immolating themselves as human-offering lamps or drowning themselves in the sea will secure them rebirth in the Pure Land, and so they rashly take it into their heads to commit this sort of act. This is, in fact, identical to "the ascetic practices of the heretics" and should be labeled as a major perverse view.[184] For this reason, such a person's suffering on entering into the flames or water is by no means insignificant. If his resolution is not exceedingly deep, how will he be able to

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183. The demon Tenma (Skt. Devaputramara) is an evil trickster who here personifies the various temptations, obstacles, doubts, and distractions that can seduce the Buddhist practitioner away from the true path.

184. "The ascetic practices of the heretics" (*gedō no kugyō*) refers to radically ascetic religious practices, such as the near-total abstinence from food and bathing and sleeping on spike mattresses. The practice of such austerities was widespread among spiritual seekers in India in the time of the Buddha, who vigorously repudiated them, preaching instead a "middle way" between the two extremes of self-mortification and self-indulgence. "Perverse views" (J. *jaken*) may refer specifically to denial of the reality of karmic cause and effect or, more generally, to various heterodox misapprehensions of reality, which are viewed as impediments to spiritual liberation.

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endure it? And due to that agony, his heart will not be serene. Not only begging for the Buddha's aid but also maintaining a mind of unwavering conviction[185] will be extremely difficult.

It seems that even among the silly prattlings of ignorant people, they say things like "I could never bring myself to become a human-offering lamp, but I could easily submerge myself in water." No doubt this is because from an onlooker's standpoint, it appears as though there is practically nothing to it; but in fact they have no idea what the experience is really like. One holy man relates, "I was drowning in the water and had already begun to die when somebody rescued me, and I just barely survived. On that occasion, so intense was the torment of the water's assault as it came in through my nose and mouth that it seemed to me that the agonies of hell itself could not possibly be this excruciating. The fact that people can nevertheless believe that water is a soft and gentle thing is because they are not yet acquainted with water as a killer."

Someone once observed, "All the various actions that we perform lie in the hearts of each of us. It is we alone who perform these actions, and we alone can know them. They are difficult for an outside observer to judge. In regard to past karmic causes, future karmic effects, and the Buddha's protection, if we just concentrate on composing our own state of mind, it will become obvious how to judge them. But let us at least clarify one thing.[186] In order to practice the way of the Buddha, if a person secludes himself in mountain forests or dwells alone in open fields yet still cherishes an attitude of fearing for his body and clinging to survival, it is by no means certain that he will be able to depend on the Buddha's protection. He should adopt the attitude that it is necessary to withdraw from the world, hiding himself behind fences and walls; and by protecting his own body and saving his own self from sickness, he should aspire to make gradual progress in his spiritual practice. If you regard your body as entirely consecrated to the Buddha—so that even if a tiger or wolf tries to harm you, you will not be overly fearful and so that even if you run out of food and are starving to death, you will not become disheartened—then without fail the Buddha will extend to you his protection, and the host of bodhisattvas, too, will come to protect you.[187] Dharma-obstructing demons and venomous beasts will find no opening for attack. Robbers will have a change of heart and go away, and through the power of the Buddha your diseases will be healed. But if you

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185. By this period, the term *shōnen* (literally, "right mindfulness") had come to encompass a range of meanings, including "a mind of unwavering faith in the Amida Buddha."

186. The author seems to suggest that one's actions, their causes and effects, and the question of whether or not the Buddha would extend his protection all boil down to a single issue: one's present spiritual condition.

187. This refers to the host of bodhisattvas who attend the Amida Buddha in the Pure Land and who are said to accompany the Amida when he comes, at the believer's moment of death, to escort and welcome the believer to the Pure Land.

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do not realize this and allow your heart to remain as shallow as ever, yet still count on the protection of the Buddha, then you will do so at your own peril."

And this, it seems to me, is indeed the truth of the matter.

[Translated by Herschel Miller]

VERNACULAR BUDDHIST LITERATURE

Buddhism entered Japan from Korea as early as the sixth century and had become a central institution in Heian aristocratic society, especially Tendai and Shingon Buddhism. But it was not until the late Heian period that it widely penetrated commoner society. Innovative priests who had become disillusioned with the older, established Buddhist institutions in the capitals of Nara and Kyoto established new Buddhist sects that appealed to commoners, who often were illiterate and could not read the Buddhist scriptures. For example, Hōnen (1133–1212) founded the Jōdoshū (Pure Land sect), which greatly influenced the medieval worldview, and his disciple Shinran (1173–1262) created the Jōdo-shinshū (New Pure Land sect). Ippen (1239–1289) founded, slightly later, the Jishū (Time sect). Another new Buddhist sect was Zen Buddhism, which was imported from China by Dōgen (1200–1253) and others and was welcomed by the samurai in Kamakura. Zen stresses meditation, nondualism (enlightenment and everyday life as ultimately one and the same), and a frugal, minimalist lifestyle. Whereas the older Buddhist schools (the six sects in Nara, Tendai, and Shingon) required many practices to achieve salvation, these new sects reduced them to one, claiming that this one practice, if carried out properly, was sufficient. Furthermore, age, social position, and education were not a barrier as long as the believer was resolute. Except for Ippen, the founders of these new Buddhist sects were associated with Tendai Buddhism, centered at Mount Hiei, which, together with Shingon, had been the main Buddhist sect during the Heian period and continued to have power and authority.

In the medieval period the term *hōgo* (literally, "words of the Buddhist law"), which originally meant to narrate the correct principle of the Buddhist law (dharma), came to describe a body of vernacular (kana) Buddhist literature. The letters in Japanese written by two Pure Land pioneers, Hōnen and Ippen, were referred to as hōgo, as were the kana writings of Zen leaders such as Dōgen. In the Tokugawa period, the category of hōgo expanded to include Buddhist setsuwa collections like *Tales of Awakening* (*Hosshinshū*), *Tales of Renunciation* (*Senjūshō*), and *Collection of Sand and Pebbles* (*Shasekishū*). Readers began to separate these texts in Japanese from Buddhist sutras and commentaries and read them as a kind of literature for nonspecialists.

In the ancient period and through much of the Heian period, major Buddhist institutions were protected and patronized by the state, and Buddhist priests participated in and supported state rituals and institutions. As a consequence, the writings and philosophy of early Buddhism tended to be separate

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wrote his most famous work, *Selection of Passages on the Nenbutsu Chosen in the Original Vow* (*Senchaku hongan nenbutsu shū*, 1198), as well as Shinran (1173–1262), who became another pioneer of Pure Land Buddhism.

One of the reasons for the popularity of Hōnen and his Pure Land doctrine at the end of the Heian period was the preexisting faith in Amida represented by *nenbutsu hijiri*, or "nenbutsu holy men," some of whom gathered around Hōnen. These men were monks, though often only tenuously attached to temples around the capital as well as the Shingon establishment at Mount Kōya, who independently promoted faith in Amida and the practice of nenbutsu. Hōnen provided a theological framework for such religious practice and propagation. Another reason that Hōnen's Pure Land sect became popular was the prevailing belief in the doctrine of *mappō* at the end of the Heian period. According to Buddhist reckoning, the dharma, or Buddhist law, has three stages or historical periods, which are schematized in various ways in Buddhist scripture and commentary. The first stage is that of the "true dharma" (*shōbō*), the "age of the true Buddhist law." This includes the life of the historical Buddha Shakyamuni and the approximately five hundred years afterward when the dharma was taught and received correctly. During this phase of Buddhism, teaching, practice, and confirmation (enlightenment) all were present. The second stage is the "semblance dharma" (*zōbō*), the "age of reflected law." This lasted for one thousand years, during which only teaching and practice were present, but enlightenment was not attainable. The final stage is the "degenerate age of the dharma" (*mappō*), or the "latter age of the Buddhist law," when only teaching is present, the Buddhist law is ignored, and the only way to salvation is through the power and beneficence of a buddha or bodhisattva. In Japan, this age was said to have begun in 1052. It is during this age of hopelessness that Amida steps in to save those beings who otherwise would languish.

Amida, a Buddha coexistent with the historical Buddha Shakyamuni, made a forty-eight-part vow to save all sentient beings that otherwise would be lost during the age of mappō. This is the "original vow," or *hongan*, sometimes called the "primal vow." Hōnen came to believe in the absolute value of the original vow and in the exclusive power of the nenbutsu to fulfill that vow.

Citing the Chinese Pure Land priest Daochuo (J. Dōshaku, 562–645), Hōnen called nenbutsu practice the "easy path" or "pure land path" and distinguished it from the "sage path," by which one seeks salvation by one's own efforts. Nenbutsu is easy because it requires simply having faith and intoning Amida's name in order to achieve rebirth (*ōjō*) in his Pure Land paradise. By stressing the easy path, Hōnen rejected all other sects and elevated the nenbutsu, which can be practiced by even the most common and uneducated, to the highest level of Buddhist practice. Hōnen thus criticized the older Buddhist sects that relied heavily on aristocratic patronage and involved complicated and often esoteric practice and study, almost always in Chinese. Instead, Hōnen stressed the universal nature of Amida's original vow and the easy practice of

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rebirth by reciting *Namu Amida Butsu*." If I know of anything more profound than this, may I be sundered from the mercy of the two honored ones[190] and left out of the original vow. Even though those who believe in nenbutsu might diligently study all the teachings the Buddha imparted in his lifetime, they should act as though they are simple-minded illiterates, making themselves the same as ignorant nuns or lay monks, never behaving as intellectuals, and reciting the nenbutsu alone with utter devotion.

REPLY TO KUMAGAI NAOZANE, THE MONK RENSEI (LATE TWELFTH CENTURY)

Kumagai Naozane (1141–1208) is best known as the Minamoto samurai who killed the young Taira no Atsumori in a battle during the Genpei war (1180–1185). The Atsumori episode in *The Tales of the Heike* and the nō play *Atsumori*, both of which are included here, indicate that Kumagai, feeling remorse for killing Atsumori, abandoned his samurai post and became a monk. (Kumagai actually did not take the tonsure until 1192, several years after the Genpei war.) This letter is a terse but detailed explanation of Hōnen's position on the *senju nenbutsu* (the exclusive practice of nenbutsu), how it is to be practiced in relation to other Buddhist practices and doctrines, and how often. Hōnen promotes the repeated recitation of nenbutsu, which, he states, can even compensate for breaking precepts. Later Pure Land proponents like Shinran and Ippen stressed the significance, rather than the frequency, of nenbutsu practice.

I rejoiced at receiving your letter. I was indeed concerned after we met, so it was gracious of you to write. I will now write about the exclusive practice of nenbutsu, so please take note. Nenbutsu practice is *the* practice included in the Buddha's original vow. Since keeping the precepts, reciting sutras, reciting mantras, and meditating on the ultimate truth are practices not included in the Buddha's original vow, those who wish for paradise[191] must first be sure to concentrate on nenbutsu practice. In addition to this, if one wishes to add other practices, so be it. But the nenbutsu of the original vow alone is sufficient. If one does not do nenbutsu, observing only other practices, then those who wish for paradise cannot be reborn into paradise—this was pronounced by Master Zendō[192]—so the exclusive practice of nenbutsu is the karma that will ensure rebirth in paradise. Master Zendō was an incarnation of Amida, which is why

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believer distracted by any practices other than nenbutsu recitation. Third is *mukenshu* (uninterrupted or continual practice), which is self-explanatory. The fourth is self-explanatory as well: *jōjishu* (long-term practice).

190. The historical Buddha Shakyamuni and Amida Buddha.

191. Amida's western Pure Land.

192. Shandao (613–681).

Material com direitos autorais

Four

There is a difference in compassion between that of the way of the sages and that of the way of the Pure Land. Compassion in the way of the sages[209] is to grieve for others, cherish them, and take care of them. But it is extremely difficult to save them as you would wish. We can say that compassion in the way of the Pure Land is uttering the nenbutsu and quickly becoming a buddha, then, with the heart of great love and great compassion,[210] benefiting the multitude of sentient beings as you would wish. In this life, no matter how we may love and pity others, because it is difficult to save them as we would wish, this compassion is unfulfilled. But just saying the nenbutsu is the heart of great love and great compassion that will see final fulfillment. Thus he spoke.

Five

I, Shinran, have never even once said a nenbutsu on behalf of my departed father and mother. The reason is that all sentient beings, every one of them, have been my fathers and mothers, brothers and sisters, in all my many reincarnations. All of them, every one, I shall save in the next life when I become a buddha. If it were a good act accomplished by my own power, then I might direct the merit of nenbutsu toward my father and mother and perhaps save them. But if I simply abandon self power and quickly achieve the enlightenment of the Pure Land, then I shall begin by saving through divine means those with ties to myself who have sunk into whatever karmic suffering in the six realms and four modes of birth.[211] Thus he spoke.

Six

Among the followers of the sole practice of nenbutsu, it seems that there are disputations about "my disciples" and "his disciples," which greatly surprises me. Shinran does not have even a single disciple. The reason is that if through my own contrivances, I cause another to say the nenbutsu, then I suppose that person is my disciple. But calling someone "my disciple" who says the nenbutsu

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209. The way of the sages is equated with *jiriki* (self power). The way of the Pure Land is *tariki* (other power), entrusting oneself to the power of Amida's vow.

210. *Daiji daihi shin*, a term usually used to describe the Buddha's love and compassion for all.

211. The six realms of rebirth (*rokudō*) are heavenly beings, humans, *asura* (warriors), beasts, hungry ghosts, and hell. Some texts place *asura* above humans, but buddhahood can be achieved only from the human realm. The four modes of birth (*shishō*) are birth through the womb, birth through eggs, birth through moisture, and birth through transformation.

Material com direitos autorais

(having received the provision of Amida)[212] is utterly ridiculous. If there is some karmic tie that leads us to attach ourselves to a teacher, then we follow him, and if there is some fate that causes us to depart, we depart; but some say that if you are separated from your teacher and are led by another to say the nenbutsu, you will not be reborn into paradise, which is absurd. Are they saying that they will take back the faithful heart that is granted by Amida, as if it were theirs? This is something that surely will never happen. When you are reconciled to the truth of the spontaneous vow,[213] you will know the benevolence of the Buddha and also the benevolence of your teacher. Thus he spoke.

BUDDHIST HYMNS IN JAPANESE (*WASAN*)

Wasan are Buddhist hymns written in Japanese. Until the Pure Land movement of the late Heian period, nearly all Buddhist discourse, including poetry, was written in Chinese. Accordingly, wasan were composed to be accessible to those without education in Chinese and to present the fundamental tenets of Pure Land faith in understandable rhythmic language, making them easy to sing and to absorb. The hymns by Shinran borrow their structure from traditional Japanese poetry, usually consisting of units of four lines in 7/5 syllabic units. By using them, Shinran avoids complex rhetoric and presents his teachings in succinct phrases. Later preachers of Pure Land belief frequently recited a Shinran wasan in a worship setting or as an introduction to an explication of doctrine.

The first group of wasan translated here is hymns of praise, and the second group describes the three stages of the dharma, or Buddhist law. They reflect the prevailing belief that people of Shinran's time were living in a degenerate age in which only the power of Amida's vow could save them. The last group of wasan reveals Shinran's keen awareness of his personal flaws that make it impossible to save himself through the accumulation of individual merit. This self-awareness of imperfection is at the heart of his belief in salvation through Amida's compassionate vow and is understood as part of the human condition shared by priests and commoners alike.

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212. The nenbutsu is uttered not through one's own will or power but through the working of Amida and his vow within the faithful heart of the believer. Amida provides the power to save as well as the words (the nenbutsu) that are the sign of salvation.

213. *Jinen no kotowari*, the power of the vow that arises from itself, the truth of which is beyond the workings of human beings.

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HYMNS IN JAPANESE ON THE PURE LAND
(*JŌDO WASAN*, MID-THIRTEENTH CENTURY)

1

Mida no myōgō tonae tsutsu	They who sincerely attain the true heart of faith[214]
shinjin makoto ni uru hito wa	while constantly uttering Amida's[215] holy name,
okunen no shin tsune ni shite	will always keep in their hearts thoughts of his vow,
butsuon hōzuru omoi ari	and wish to repay his great benevolence.

3

Mida jōbutsu no konokata wa	Amida, since his achievement of buddhahood,
ima ni jūkō o he tamaeri	has now passed through ten kalpas.
hōshin no kōrin kiwa mo naku	His dharma-body's[216] circle of light is endless,
se no mōmyō o terasu nari	illuminating the world's blind ignorance.

4

chie no kōmyō hakari nashi	The light of his wisdom is immeasurable;
uryō no shosō kotogotoku	of all finite beings, each and every one,
kōkyō kōranu mono wa nashi	none do not receive his light, blazing like the dawn,
shinjitsumyō ni kimyō seyo	so take refuge[217] in his light, which is true and real.

---

214. *Shinjin* (true heart of faith).

215. Amida is called Mida here. Mida became a common contraction of Amida around the time of Shinran and reflects the nature of the close personal relationship to Amida Buddha cherished by Pure Land followers.

216. *Hosshin* (Skt. Dharmakaya). Dharma-body is one of the three bodies an enlightened one (buddha) receives. The dharma-body is the dharma itself, or "absolute truth." Once one has perceived the dharma, one is enlightened and thus assumes the dharma-body, thereby becoming one with the dharma. Thus enlightenment is a realization that all things, including the self, are one and nondifferentiated.

217. Submit to or rely on Amida, his vow, and his teaching.

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5

gedatsu no kōrin kiwa mo nashi	Liberation's circle of light has no limits;
kōsoku kōru mono wa mina	all who come in contact with this light, he has taught,
umu o hanaru to nobe tamau	are freed from existence and from nonexistence,
byōdōkaku ni kimyō seyo	so rely on the equity of his enlightenment.

HYMNS IN JAPANESE ON THE THREE STAGES OF THE BUDDHIST LAW
(*SHŌZŌMATSU NO JŌDO WASAN*)

Preface

In the second year of Kōgen, on the night of the ninth day of the Second Month, in the hour of the tiger, I was told in a dream:[218]

Mida no hongan shinzu beshi	Entrust yourself to Amida's original vow.
hongan shinzuru hito wa mina	All who entrust themselves to the original vow,
shūshu fusha no riyaku ni te	through the boon of being grasped, never abandoned,[219]
mujōkaku o ba satoru nari	will realize the supreme enlightenment.

1

Shaka nyorai kakure mashimashite	It is now two thousand years or more since the
nisen yonen ni nari tamau	passing of the Tathagata Shakyamuni.[220]
shōzō no niji wa owari ni ki	The true and semblance ages have come to their end.
Nyorai no yuitei hikyū seyo	Lament! Disciples left behind by the Tathagata.

218. The year is 1257. The hour of the tiger is between 3:00 and 5:00 A.M.

219. Amida's light of compassion grasping, or encompassing, all beings, never to abandon them.

220. Tathagatha is a title meaning a buddha who has achieved perfect enlightenment and then returned to save others. Shakyamuni is the historical Buddha.

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2

mappō gojoku no ujō no	In the last dharma age of the five defilements,[221]
gyōshō kanawanu toki nareba	sentient beings can neither practice nor realize,[222]
Shaka no yuihō kotogotoku	so all the teachings left behind by Shakyamuni
ryūgū ni iri tamai ni ki	have entered the palace of the dragon king.[223]

3

shōzōmatsu no sanji ni wa	During the true, semblance, and last dharma ages,
Mida no hongan hiromareri	Amida's original vow has spread, but at the
zōki mappō no kono yo ni wa	end of the semblance and in this last dharma age,
shozen ryūgū ni iri tamau	all goodness[224] has entered the dragon king's palace.

20

dōshūjōshin to iu koto wa	That which is called "the heart that saves all sentient beings"
Mida chigan no ekō nari	is Amida's vow of wisdom directed toward us.
ekō no shingyō uru hito wa	Those who entrust themselves to his directed virtue
daihatsu nehan o satoru nari	will realize the greatest nirvana.[225]

21

Nyorai no ekō ni kinyū shite	Those who enter the virtue directed from Amida

---

221. *Gojoku*. The five defilements that accompany a degenerate age are famines, pestilence, and war; evil deeds by humans; inordinate desire and struggle; apostasy and false teachings; and a shortened life span.

222. Realize enlightenment.

223. It was said among some Buddhists, especially the Kegon (Ch. Huayan) sect, that the purest and most direct teachings of the Buddha Shakyamuni were given to the naga (serpent or dragon) king to store in his palace under the sea until the time came that human beings were ready to receive the teaching.

224. Good acts or good practices.

225. The highest possible state of nirvana.

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gansa busshin o uru hito wa	and attain the mind that aspires to buddhahood
jiriki no ekō o sute hatete	abandon the directing of merit through self power;[226]
riyaku ujō wa kiwa mo nashi	thus the benefit to all sentient beings is boundless.

22

Mida no chigan kaisui ni	When the waters of true faith in other power
tariki no shinsui iri nureba	enter the sea of Amida's vow of wisdom,
shinjitsu hōdo no narai ni te	then as is common in the true and real fulfilled land,[227]
bonnō bodai ichimi nari	deranged passion and enlightenment become one savor.

57

tariki no shinjin uru hito o	Those who attain the true heart of faith in other power,
uyamai ōki ni yorokobeba	the Master Teacher, the World-honored One, praises:
sunawachi waga shinyū zo to	"Revere and greatly rejoice in the dharma, and
kyōshu seson wa home tamau	you shall be my friends."

58

Nyorai daihi no ondoku wa	The benevolence of Amida's great compassion
mi o ko ni shite mo hōzu beshi	we must repay, though our bodies be turned to dust.
shishu chishiki no ondoku mo	The benevolence of our masters and teachers
hone o kudakite mo shasu beshi	we must thank them for, though all our bones be broken.

226. Through good deeds, diligent practice, and so forth, the Buddhist practitioner can direct the accumulated merit to his or her own salvation or the salvation of others. Similarly, Amida directs his boundless merit and virtue toward all sentient beings. Shinran decries self power (*jiriki*) and urges the practitioner to rely on the power of Amida, the other power (*tariki*).

227. The Pure Land of Amida, which came about as a fulfillment of his vow.

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GUTOKU'S EXPRESSIONS OF LAMENTATION (*GUTOKU HITAN JUTSUKAI*)

1

Jōdo shinshū ni kisuredomo	Although I take haven in the true faith[228] of the Pure Land,
shinjitsu no shin wa arigatashi	it is hard to maintain the true and sincere heart.
koke fujitsu no waga mi ni te	My self is full of falsehood and dishonesty;
shōjō no shin mo sara ni nashi	thus I am completely devoid of a pure heart too.

2

gegi no sugata wa hito goto ni	In our outward appearance each of us tries to look
genzen shōjin genzeshimu	wise and good and devoted;
tonjin jagi ōki yue	but so great is our greed, our anger, evil, and deceit,
kansa momowashi mi ni miteri	that we are filled with malice and cunning galore.

3

akushō sara ni yame gatashi	Our evil nature is extremely hard to halt.
kokoro wa jakatsu no gotoku nari	Our hearts are like poisonous snakes or scorpions.
shuzen mo zōdoku naru yue ni	Since our doing good deeds, too, is polluted with poison,
koke no gyō to zo nazuketaru	such practice is called empty, false, and vain.

4

muzan muki no kono mi ni te	Though I am shameless before heaven and men,
makoto no kokoro wa nakeredomo	and lack the true heart of faith,

228. "True faith" (*shinshū*) refers to Shinran's Pure Land worship.

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in a mirror; it is not like the moon on the water.[235] When they realize one side, the other side is darkness.

To learn the Buddha Way is to learn one's self. To learn one's self is to forget one's self. To forget one's self is to be confirmed by all dharmas. To be confirmed by all dharmas is to cast off one's body and mind and the bodies and minds of others as well. All trace of enlightenment disappears, and this traceless enlightenment continues without end.[236]

The moment you begin seeking the Dharma, you move far from its environs. The moment the Dharma has been rightly transmitted to you, you become the person of your original self.[237]

When a man is in a boat at sea and looks back at the shoreline, it may seem to him as though the shore is moving. But when he fixes his gaze closely on the boat, he realizes it is the boat that is moving. In like manner, when a person tries to discern and affirm things with a confused notion of his body and mind, he makes the mistake of thinking that his own mind, his own nature, is permanent and unchanging. If he turns back within himself, making all his daily deeds immediately and directly his own, the reason that all things have no selfhood becomes clear to him.[238]

Once firewood turns to ash, the ash cannot revert to being firewood. But you should not assume that it is ashes afterward and firewood beforehand. You should realize that although firewood is at the dharma-stage of firewood and that this has a before and an after, the firewood is at the same time independent, completely cut off from before and completely cut off from after. Ashes are in the dharma-stage of ashes, which also has a before and after. Just as firewood does not revert to wood once it has turned to ashes, human beings do not return to life after they have died. Buddhists do not speak of life becoming death. They speak of being "unborn." Since it is a confirmed Buddhist teaching that death does not become life, Buddhists speak of being "undying." Life is a stage of

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235. One realizes upon attaining enlightenment that things and oneself are one, but it is not that the moon reflected on the water (hearer, seer) receives the total moonlight (Dharma) in all its clarity and brightness: when one side is realized, the other side is "darkness."

236. Although all trace or consciousness of enlightenment disappears with the casting off of body and mind, enlightenment itself does not disappear but continues into everyday life and then on endlessly.

237. That is, a person ultimately enlightened to the life of the true self. The Dharma is not to be found externally; it is inseparable from oneself, and the self is inseparable from the Dharma. If you seek elsewhere, you will fall into illusion. When you are free from attachment to self and attachment to Dharma, you will receive the transmission of the Dharma.

238. Dōgen uses the boat analogy to point out the illusion of mistakenly accepting the impermanent as permanent. If you keep your eyes on your "boat" (turn within yourself) and cease to follow external dharmas, you will realize that you and all dharmas are without permanent self and thus awaken from the illusion that your self is permanent.

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chair facing the statue of Monju[251] and does *zazen*; the head monk faces the outer edge of the sitting platform and does *zazen*; and the other monks face the wall and do *zazen*.

. . . When the evening *zazen* is supposed to end . . . the *han*[252] is sounded. . . . After removing their surplices the monks continue the *zazen* for a while. Slowly and deliberately they unroll their quilts, arrange their pillows, and lie down when the others do. Do not remain sitting when the other monks do not, or look around at the assembly. Do not arbitrarily leave your place and go where you should not. Just going along with the community and lying down is the correct manner.

. . . Definitely sleep lying on your right side and not on your left side. When you lie down, your head should be toward Buddha. Now, in the monks' hall, our heads are toward the *jōen*,[253] so our heads are toward Monju.

. . . Toward the end of the night, hearing the sound of the *han* in front of the head monk's office . . . the assembly gets up gently, not rising precipitously. Do not still remain sleeping or lying down, which is rude to the assembly. Quietly take your pillow and place it in front of the cabinet, not making noise as you fold it. Be careful not to disturb your neighbors on the meditation platform.

Stay at your seat for a while, cover yourself with your quilt, and do *zazen* on your *zafu*.[254] . . . If you flutter your eyes, a faint breeze will enter them, and you will easily be aroused from your sluggishness. Never forget that dying occurs quickly and that you have not yet clarified the conduct of the Way. . . . Do not cover your head with your quilt. As you become aware of sleepiness, remove the quilt and, with a buoyant body, do *zazen*.

Hearing an opportunity, proceed to the washroom,[255] and wash your face. (Hearing an opportunity means when it is not crowded with other monks washing their faces.) . . . When you arrive at the sink area, wait for a place. Do not push aside the other monks. When you get a space, then wash your face. . . . Next, hold your tooth stick,[256] join your palms in reverence, and say:

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251. Monju (Skt. Mañjuśrī) is a bodhisattva usually representing Perfected Wisdom.

252. *Han* is a hanging wooden block that is struck with a wooden mallet to signal events in the monastery.

253. *Jōen* is the inner edge of the monks' platforms on which eating bowls are placed during meals.

254. *Zafu* is a round sitting cushion, which Dōgen calls *futon*.

255. "Washroom" (*kōka*) is the toilets and separate washroom at the back of the *sōdō*.

256. "Tooth stick" is *yōji*, a willow twig whose end was chewed and softened so as to be used like a modern toothbrush.

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think of what is not thinking. How do you think of what is not thinking? Nonthinking.[259] This is the essential art of *zazen*.[260]

[Adapted from a translation by Taigen Daniel Leighton and Shohaku Okumura]

SELECTED POEMS

Throughout his life, Dōgen composed Japanese (*waka*) and Chinese (*kanshi*) poems that reflect the coexistence of doctrine, philosophy, aesthetics, politics, and social factors in his writings and life. The selections presented here offer Dōgen's views of various aspects of Buddhist thought in poetry as both a private means of introspection and a form of public address.

Japanese Poems (waka)

Impermanence.

yo no naka wa	To what shall
nani ni tatoen	I liken the world?
mizudori no	Moonlight, reflected
hashi furu tsuyu ni	in dewdrops,
yadoru tsukikage	shaken from a crane's bill.[261]

259. This refers to a dialogue, quoted by Dōgen in several writings, between a monk and Yaoshan Weiyan (745–828), a Tang-dynasty hermit monk. The monk asked Yaoshan what he thought of while engaged in immobile sitting. When he responded that he thought of not thinking (*fushiryō*), the monk asked how he did that. Yaoshan responded, "Nonthinking" (*hishiryō*). This nonthinking refers to a state of active awareness that includes both thinking and not thinking but does not grasp, or get caught by, either thinking or not thinking.

260. Variations on this paragraph are found in other writings attributed to Dōgen. Perhaps the most famous of these is *Universal Promotion of the Principles of Zazen* (*Fukanzazengi*, 1233), a kanbun text long considered to be the first teaching on seated meditation by Dōgen. Variants of this passage are regularly recited by the Sōtō Zen community during sessions of seated meditation and thus fulfill a ritual as well as instructional role.

261. This poem, whose date of composition is unknown, presents the Buddhist metaphors of moonlight and dew as enlightenment and impermanence, respectively. The Buddhist view of the reflection of enlightenment (absolute reality) in every aspect of the phenomenal world (relative reality), represented by the dew, expresses these two aspects of reality as interconnected. The last line introduces the element of time. The dewdrops falling off the crane's bill can be seen according to Dōgen's concept of "being-time." Every moment in the relative world reflects and contains the entirety of moments of the absolute world (the moonlight): a single being-time instance of full realization implies the full realization of everything at all times. But this realization, which must take place within the relative world, is transient and thus must be repeated continuously in order to continuously realize it. Failing to do so would mean holding on to one's "body and mind" and the moment of realization, thus distinguishing between the two aspects of reality.

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aki dani mo	one last time grows deepest,
koyoi no tsuki ni	the image I behold this autumn night
nerare yawa suru	leaves me sleepless for its beauty.[264]

Chinese Poems (kanshi)

Death verse, a rewriting of Rujing's verse.

For fifty-four years
following the way of heaven;
now leaping beyond,
shattering every barrier,
amazing! To cast off all attachments,
while still alive, plunging into the Yellow Springs.[265]

[Adapted from a translation by Steven Heine]

ANECDOTES (*SETSUWA*)

Collections of *setsuwa* (anecdotes) existed from as early as the *fudoki* (provincial gazetteers) in the Nara period and the *Nihon ryōiki* (ca. 822), but the great period of setsuwa is the late Heian period, beginning with the *Collection of Tales of Times Now Past* (*Konjaku monogatari shū*, ca. 1120), through the Kamakura period (1185–1333), when several setsuwa collections were compiled. The most famous of the Kamakura-period setsuwa collections, at least today, is

264. In 1253, terminally ill, Dōgen embarked on his final journey to Kyoto. On the way, he composed two waka, this being one of them, reflecting both his longing (represented by the moon and autumn) and his excitement (his inability to sleep) at the prospect of returning to the capital after a hiatus of ten years. Dōgen also superimposes a second layer of meaning by employing the Buddhist metaphor of the moon as enlightenment. Even after a whole life of Zen meditation and after having "dropped off body and mind," emotions of longing for his birthplace still stir his heart. His awareness of the impending death and the return to the seat of court society from the isolation of the provinces to which he has retreated (possibly out of bitterness for not having been recognized as a leading figure in the Kyoto religious community) also are emotions that find their way in this concise reflection on his whole life.

265. The death poem of a Zen master, composed while awaiting death in seated meditation, is considered one of the most important expressions of the master's depth of realization. In this final poem, Dōgen reaches back to his Chinese master, Rujing, who validated Dōgen's enlightenment experience and to whom Dōgen connects his Dharma lineage. Rujing's own death poem was: "For sixty-six years committing terrible sins against heaven. Now leaping beyond, while still alive, plunging into the Yellow Springs; amazing! I used to believe that life and death were unrelated." The Yellow Springs (a symbol of both nirvana and hell) await Rujing after a life of sins. Dōgen turns this self-critical stance into an affirmation of his life lived in line with the teachings of his master and of the Buddha himself, a life in which Dōgen has shattered the barrier of ignorance and has leaped beyond (realized enlightenment and gone beyond the realm of illusion to nirvana).

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A Collection of Tales from Uji (*Uji shūi monogatari,* early thirteenth century). These collections, which were edited by aristocrats or priests of aristocratic origin, mark the emergence of a new, robust form of literature, reflecting new values and social groups, which ranged from commoners, warriors, and priests to aristocrats. They embraced a wide variety of topics, from poetry to violence to sex.

Yanagita Kunio (1875–1962), one of the founders of modern Japanese folklore studies, once defined setsuwa both as a narration that is spoken and heard and as written literature, as collections of recorded stories. All setsuwa now are in written form, though they reveal traces of their original oral transmission.

In contrast to monogatari, which admit to their fictionality, setsuwa present the narration as history, as a record of past events, even when these events tend to be about the strange, miraculous, or unusual, causing surprise. In the medieval and Tokugawa periods, setsuwa collections were considered to be a kind of historical record or vernacular Buddhist writing (*hōgo*), and it was not until the modern period that they were considered a type of literature (*bungaku*) comparable to the monogatari.

The setsuwa also differ from monogatari and military chronicles by their brevity. They tend to be action oriented (plot centered) and compact, often focusing on a single event, much like a short story. The collections or anthologies of setsuwa, however, can be very large, such as the *Collection of Tales of Times Now Past* and *A Collection of Tales from Uji*, and have their own complex thematic structure. Like the poems in a poetry collection, setsuwa can be read both independently and as part of a larger sequence or section.

The setsuwa genre is also marked by didactic endings. The editor of each setsuwa collection gives each setsuwa a particular function. Thus the same setsuwa may appear in one collection as a Buddhist setsuwa, in another collection as a secular setsuwa, and in yet another collection as part of a poetry handbook. About half the extant setsuwa collections are Buddhist, beginning with the *Nihon ryōiki,* reflecting the large role they played in preaching and teaching the Buddhist law. Although we sometimes know the editors, such as Priest Mujū (1226–1312), the editor of *Shasekishū* (*Collection of Sand and Pebbles*, 1279–1283), the setsuwa themselves, which were constantly recycled and reworked, are anonymous. In contrast to those in the early fudoki and the *Nihon ryōiki*, which are written in Chinese, the collections from the late Heian through the Kamakura period, the heyday of the setsuwa, are written in vernacular Japanese.

In the late medieval period, the setsuwa were replaced by *otogi-zōshi* (Muromachi tales), which are a longer narrative form that incorporates more elements of the monogatari. Both during and after their peak, setsuwa provided a constant and deep source of material for other genres, such as the literary diary (*nikki*), monogatari, warrior tale, historical chronicle, nō drama, *kōwakamai* (ballad drama), *kyōgen*, otogi-zōshi, and *sekkyō-bushi*. A closely related genre is the warrior tale or chronicle, which often integrates setsuwa into a longer chronological narrative.

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A COLLECTION OF TALES FROM UJI
(*UJI SHŪI MONOGATARI*, EARLY THIRTEENTH CENTURY)

A Collection of Tales from Uji is the most popular and widely read of the medieval setsuwa collections. The quality of the writing was considered to be unsurpassed among setsuwa collections, and it was widely printed and read in the Tokugawa period. Although the author and date of composition are uncertain, it is generally considered to be an early-thirteenth-century work. A late-Heian-period aristocrat, the senior counselor (*dainagon*) Minamoto no Takakuni, who lived in the twelfth century at the Byōdō-in at Uji, south of the capital, is thought to have written a work entitled *Tales of the Senior Counselor* (*Uji dainagon monogatari*), which was very popular but was lost. The attempt to reconstruct the lost text in the early thirteenth century resulted in *Uji shūi monogatari*. The *Uji* in this title refers to the Byōdō-in, and *shūi* (collection of remains) probably refers to collecting the remains of the *Uji dainagon monogatari*.

Uji shūi monogatari contains 197 stories, of which 80 also appear in the Heian-period *Collection of Tales of Times Now Past* (*Konjaku monogatari shū*), and a number appear in other setsuwa collections. The fact that so many of these stories appear elsewhere is an indication of how popular they were at the time. Fifty of the stories are not duplicated elsewhere, however, including humorous tales with sexual content and folktales, such as "How Someone Had a Wen Removed by Demons."

The stories in *Uji shūi monogatari* are not arranged according to subject matter, as they are in *Konjaku monogatari shū*, nor does the collection seem to have any particular order or plan, except to include the most interesting stories. They are of many kinds: serious and humorous, Japanese and foreign (India and China), Buddhist (about one-third to one-half of the stories), and secular, with many of the most noted being secular. Unlike the Buddhist anecdotes in *Konjaku monogatari shū*, these Buddhist-related stories do not appear to be intended for immediate religious use. Instead, the interest is in looking at individuals and human society with an ironic eye and a love of good storytelling. Whereas in the late Heian and early Kamakura periods, setsuwa were collected as part of the attempt to preserve artifacts of court culture that was rapidly disappearing, in *Uji shūi monogatari* the point of view is not at all fixed, instead exploring different classes and social groups from different angles.

The stories in *Uji shūi monogatari* are not records of oral performances but are written narratives that assume the characteristics of such a performance. Accordingly, they open with set phrases like "Now, long ago" (*Ima wa mukashi*) and end with "so it has been told" (*to ka, to zo, to nan*). Both "Wen Removed by Demons" and "How a Sparrow Repaid Its Debt of Gratitude" finish with a didactic message, but these were probably added as part of the convention of storytelling.

"How Someone Had a Wen Removed by Demons" (1:3) is a variation on a folktale (*mukashi-banashi*) that reappears in myriad forms across the centuries. Although most of the *oni* (demons) that appear in *Uji shūi monogatari* are fearful in appearance, here they dance, drink, and enjoy themselves, so much that the old man joins them, an image that no doubt appealed to commoner audiences.

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"How a Sparrow Repaid Its Debt of Gratitude" (3:16) is another variation on a folktale. The sparrows (like other creatures) provide rewards and punishments in accordance with actions of the humans. Like "Wen Removed by Demons," this setsuwa draws on a familiar folktale pattern, of neighbors who stand in contrast to one another in moral character, in which the rewards and punishments directly reflect their contrasting moral character.

"How Yoshihide, a Painter of Buddhist Pictures, Took Pleasure in Seeing His House on Fire" (1:38), which also appears in the *Jikkinshō* (1:6), provided the basis for the famous short story "Hell Screen" (Jigokuhen), by Akutagawa Ryūnosuke (1892–1927). Although Yoshihide's house is burning, he makes no effort to put out the fire and thus is able to create a great painting of the Fudōmyō Buddha in the midst of flames. In Akutagawa's story, the author takes the story of absolute dedication to one's artistic path one step further: the painter watches his daughter burn to death. "About the Priest with the Long Nose" (2:7), which also is included here, was adapted by Akutagawa as well, into a noted short story entitled "Nose" (Hana).

"How a Man Received a Bounty After a Period of Prayer at the Hase Temple" (7:5) is about the miraculous powers of the Kannon (bodhisattva of mercy) at Hase Temple (in Nara) and belongs to the category of stories about the miraculous powers of a deity or a temple. (A similar story appears in *Konjaku monogatari shū* [16:28], in a section on the Kannon.) But the real interest of this story is in the rise from poverty to wealth through a series of fortuitous exchanges, which begin with something very small (a stalk of straw and a horsefly) and gradually increase in size.

How Someone Had a Wen Removed by Demons (1:3)

Again, there was once an old man who had a big wen on his right cheek, the size of an orange. On account of this he avoided mixing with people and made his living gathering firewood. When in the mountains one day, he was caught in such a violent storm that he was unable to get home and had no choice but to stay where he was, out there in the wilds. Having no other woodcutter with him, he was scared out of his wits, so he got inside a nearby hollow tree and squatted down, though he made no attempt to sleep. Suddenly he heard in the distance a noisy crowd of people approaching. It put new life into him to find some signs of humanity when he was all alone in the wilds, and he looked out—only to find a swarm of some hundred creatures of all sorts and descriptions, red ones dressed in blue, black ones wearing red loincloths, some with only one eye and some with no mouth—the whole lot hideous beyond words. In a noisy, jostling throng, carrying torches that blazed as brightly as the sun, they seated themselves in a circle before the hollow tree where he was sheltering. He was almost beside himself with terror.

One demon who appeared to be the leader sat at the head, and in two rows on his right and left were countless other demons, every single one of them indescribably horrible to look at. They were offering each other wine and enjoying themselves just like ordinary people. The wine jar went round many

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Yoshihide's house too, he saved himself by running out into the street. Inside the house he had some pictures of Buddhist divinities that he had been commissioned to paint. Also inside were his wife and children, all caught there without even having time to dress. But Yoshihide did not give them a thought, he simply stood on the other side of the street congratulating himself on his own escape. As he watched, he could see that the fire now had a grip on his own house, and he continued to watch from the other side of the street until the house was a mass of billowing smoke and flame. Several people came up to him to express their sympathy at this awful disaster, but he was completely unperturbed, and when asked why, all he did was to go on standing there on the other side of the street watching his house burn, nodding his head and every now and then breaking into a laugh. "What a stroke of luck!" he said. "This is something I've never been able to paint properly for all these years." The people who had come to express their condolences asked him how he could just stand there like that. "What a shocking way to behave! Has some demon got into you?" they asked. Yoshihide, however, only stood laughing scornfully, and replied, "Of course not. For years now I've not been able to paint a good halo of fire in my pictures of the god Fudō.[268] Now that I've seen this, I've learned what a fire really looks like. That's a real stroke of luck. If you want to make a living at this branch of art, you can have any number of houses you like—provided you're good at painting Buddhas and gods. It's only because you have no talent for art that you set such store by material things."

It was perhaps from this time on that he began to paint pictures of his "Curling Fudō," which even nowadays people praise so highly.

How a Sparrow Repaid Its Debt of Gratitude (3:16)

Long ago, one fine day in spring, a woman of about sixty was sitting cleansing herself of lice when she saw a boy pick up a stone and throw it at one of the sparrows that were hopping around in the garden. The stone broke the bird's leg, and as it floundered about, wildly flapping its wings, a crow came swooping down on it. "Oh, the poor thing," cried the woman, "the crow will get it," and snatching it up, she revived it with her breath and gave it something to eat. At night, she placed it for safety in a little bucket. Next morning, when she gave it some rice and also a medicinal powder made from ground copper, her children and grandchildren ridiculed her. "Just look," they jeered, "Granny's taken to keeping sparrows in her old age."

For several months she tended it, till in time it was hopping about again, and though it was only a sparrow, it was deeply grateful to her for nursing it

268. Fudō Myōō (Skt. Acala) was one of the Five Great Guardian Kings and a figure of particular importance to esoteric Buddhism.

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back to health. Whenever she left the house on the slightest errand, the woman would ask someone to look after the sparrow and feed it. The family ridiculed her and wanted to know whatever she was keeping a sparrow for, but she would reply, "Never you mind! I just feel sorry for it." She kept it till it could fly again, then, confident that there was no longer any risk of its being caught by a crow, she went outside and held it up on her hand to see if it would fly away. Off it went with a flap of its wings. Everyone laughed at the woman because she missed her sparrow so much. "For so long now I've been used to shutting it up at night and feeding it in the morning," she said, "and oh dear, now it's flown away! I wonder if it will ever come back."

About three weeks later, she suddenly heard a sparrow chirruping away near her house, and wondering if all this chirruping meant that her sparrow had come back, she went out to see, and found that it had. "Well I never!" she exclaimed. "What a wonderful thing for it to remember me and come back!" The sparrow took one look at the woman's face, then it seemed to drop some tiny object out of its mouth and flew away. "Whatever can it be, this thing the sparrow has dropped?" she exclaimed, and going up to it, she found it was a single calabash-seed. "It must have had some reason for bringing this," she said, and she picked it up and kept it. Her children laughed at her and said, "There's a fine thing to do, getting something from a sparrow and treating it as if you'd got a fortune!" "All the same," she told them, "I'm going to plant it and see what happens," which she did. When autumn came, the seed had produced an enormous crop of calabashes, much larger and more plentiful than usual. Delighted, the woman gave some to her neighbors, and however many she picked, the supply was inexhaustible. The children who had laughed at her were now eating the fruit from morning to night, while everyone in the village received a share. In the end, the woman picked out seven or eight especially big ones to make into gourds, and hung them up in the house.

After several months, she inspected them and found that they were ready. As she took them down to cut openings in them, she thought they seemed rather heavy, which was mysterious. But when she cut one open, she found it full to the brim. Wondering whatever could be inside it, she began emptying it out—and found it full of white rice! In utter amazement, she poured all the rice into a large vessel, only to discover that the gourd immediately refilled itself. "Obviously some miracle has taken place—it must be the sparrow's doing," she exclaimed, bewildered but very happy. She put that gourd away out of sight before she examined the rest of them, but they all proved to be crammed full of rice, just like the first one. Whenever she took rice from the gourds, there was always far more than she could possibly use, so that she became extremely rich. The people in the neighboring villages were astonished to see how prosperous she had become, and were filled with envy at her incredible good fortune.

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Now the children of the woman who lived next door said to their mother, "You and that woman next door are the same sort of people, but just look where she's got to! Why haven't you ever managed to do any good for us?" Their criticism stung the woman into going to see her neighbor. "Well, well, however did you manage this business?" she asked. "I've heard some talk about it being something to do with a sparrow, but I'm not really sure, so would you tell how it all came about, please?" "Well, it all began when a sparrow dropped a calabash-seed and I planted it," said the other woman, rather vaguely. But when her neighbor pressed her to explain the whole story in detail, she felt she ought not to be petty and keep it to herself, so she explained how there had been a sparrow with a broken leg that she had nursed back to health, and how it must have been so grateful that it had brought her a calabash-seed, which she had planted; and that was how she had come to be wealthy. "Will you give me one of the seeds?" she was asked, but this she refused to do. "I'll give you some of the rice that was in the gourds," she said, "but I can't give you a seed. I can't possibly let those go." The neighbor now began to keep a sharp lookout in case she too might find a sparrow with a broken leg to tend. But there were no such sparrows to be found. Every morning as she looked out, there would be sparrows hopping around pecking at any grains of rice that happened to be lying about outside the back door—and one day she picked up some stones and threw them in the hope of hitting one. Since she had several throws and there was such a flock of birds, she naturally managed to hit one, and as it lay on the ground, unable to fly away, she went up to it in great excitement and hit it again, to make sure that its leg was broken. Then she picked it up and took it indoors, where she fed it and treated it with medicine. "Why, if a single sparrow brought my neighbor all that wealth," she thought to herself, "I should be much richer still if I had several of them. I should get a lot more credit from my children than she did from hers." So she scattered some rice in the doorway and sat watching, then when a group of sparrows gathered to peck at it, she threw several stones at them, injuring three. "That will do," she thought, and putting the three sparrows with broken legs into a bucket, she fed them a medicinal powder made from ground copper. Some months later, feeling very pleased with herself now that they had all recovered, she took them outdoors and they all flew away. In her own estimation she had acted with great kindness. But the sparrows bitterly resented having had their legs broken and being kept in captivity for months.

Ten days went by, and to the woman's great joy the sparrows returned. As she was staring at them to see if they had anything in their mouths, they each dropped a calabash-seed and flew off. "It's worked," she thought exultantly, and picking up the seeds, she planted them in three places. In no time, much faster than ordinary ones, they had grown into huge plants, though none of them had borne much fruit—not more than seven or eight calabashes. She beamed with

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pleasure as she looked at them. "You complained that I had never managed to do any good for you," she said to her children, "but now I'll do better than that woman next door," and the family very much hoped that she would. Since there were only a few calabashes, she did not eat any herself or let anyone else eat any, in the hope of getting more rice from them. Her children grumbled, "The woman next door ate some of hers and gave some to her neighbors. And we've got three seeds, which is more than she had, so there ought to be something for ourselves and the neighbors to eat." Feeling that perhaps they were right, the woman gave some away to the neighbors, while she cooked a number of the fruit for herself and her family to eat. The calabashes tasted terribly bitter, however; they were just like the *kihada* fruit that people use as a medicine, and made everyone feel quite nauseated. Every single person who had eaten any, including the woman herself and her children, was sick. The neighbors were furious and came round in a very ugly mood, demanding to know what it was she had given them. "It's shocking," they said. "Even people who only got a whiff of the things felt as if they were on their last legs with sickness and nausea." The woman and her children, meanwhile, were sprawled out half-unconscious and vomiting all over the place, so that there was little point in the neighbors' complaining, and they went away. In two or three days, everyone had recovered, and the woman came to the conclusion that the peculiar things which had happened must have been the outcome of being overhasty and eating the calabashes which should have given rice. She therefore hung the rest of the fruit up to store. After some months, when she felt they would be ready, she went into the storeroom armed with buckets to hold the rice. Her toothless mouth grinning from ear to ear with happiness, she held the buckets up to the gourds and went to pour out the contents of the fruit—but what emerged was a stream of things like horseflies, bees, centipedes, lizards, and snakes, which attacked and stung her, not only on her face but all over her body. Yet she felt no pain, and thought that it was rice pouring over her, for she shouted, "Wait a moment, my sparrows. Let me get it a little at a time." Out of the seven or eight gourds came a vast horde of venomous creatures which stung the children and their mother—the latter so badly that she died. The sparrows had resented having their legs broken and had persuaded swarms of insects and reptiles to enter the gourds; whereas the sparrow next door had been grateful because when it had broken its leg it had been saved from a crow and nursed back to health.

So you see, you should never be jealous of other people.

How a Man Received a Bounty After a Period of Prayer at the Hase Temple (7:5)

Long ago, there was a young samurai who was all alone in the world, without parents or master, wife or children. Being in dire straits, he made a pilgrimage

Bahan dengan hak cipta

to Hase[269] to implore the aid of Kannon, and prostrating himself before her image, he pleaded, "If my life is destined to continue as at present, then I will remain here before you and starve to death. But if it is my destiny to find some means of livelihood, then I shall not leave here until I am told about it in a dream." When the priests of the temple saw him lying there, they challenged him. "Who are you, lying here like this? You haven't been seen to eat anything, and if you just go on lying here, you will end up polluting the temple, and that will be serious. Who is your spiritual adviser? Where are you getting food?" "How could the likes of me have a spiritual adviser, when I have no means of supporting myself?" replied the young man. "I've no benefactor, or anyone to take pity on me. I eat whatever the Bodhisattva cares to bestow on me and look to her as my spiritual guide." The priests now conferred together, saying, "This is most awkward. It will bring harm upon the temple. Why, he's actually complaining about Kannon. Let us all get together to look after him, and let him stay here." They took turns at supplying him with food, and for three whole weeks he continued to eat everything they brought him, never leaving his position before the Bodhisattva.

Toward dawn on the twenty-second day, he dreamed that someone came out from behind the curtain and told him, "It is outrageous for you to lie here complaining about Kannon, ignoring the fact that your poverty is retribution for your sins in a past life. And yet your tale is rather pathetic, so the Bodhisattva has granted you a small favor. First, you must leave the temple at once, and as you go, pick up whatever comes to hand and keep it. Hurry up now and be on your way." Waking from his dream of being sent away, he got up from the ground and went to the quarters of the priests who had undertaken to look after him, where he had a good meal. Then he left the temple. Just as he was going through the main gate he stumbled and fell headlong.

As he got to his feet, he found he had unwittingly clutched at something. It proved to be a stalk of straw, and he wondered forlornly if this could be the Bodhisattva's gift to him. But he reflected that perhaps she had some special plan in mind, and he walked on idly twiddling the straw in his fingers. Just then a horsefly came buzzing around his face, and in annoyance he broke off a twig to brush it away. But when it continued to buzz round and annoy him, he caught it, and tying the straw round its body, carried it along fixed to the end of the twig. Tied up like this, the fly buzzed around but could not get away. Now it happened that a very beautiful little girl who was on her way to worship at Hase was peering out from under the blinds of her carriage, and she called to the horsemen of her escort, "What is that man holding? Get it from him and bring it to me." "You there!" they shouted. "The young lady wants that thing

269. Hase Temple, also known as the Chōkuku Temple, is a temple in Nara Prefecture, famous for its close ties with the Kannon bodhisattva.

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you've got there. Hand it over." "This is a gift from the Bodhisattva," he replied, "but since Her Ladyship has asked for it, she can have it," and he gave it to the men. "That's very good of you, not to make a fuss about letting Her Ladyship have this thing she wants," they said. "Here, you must be thirsty," said the young lady. "Eat these"; and she had one of her escort give the man three oranges wrapped in highly perfumed *michinoku* paper.

Very pleased to find his single stalk of straw had turned into three oranges, he tied them to a stick and went off carrying it over his shoulder. Next he met a lady on foot, with a large escort of retainers; evidently she was a person of some consequence traveling incognito. She had walked so far that she was quite worn out and ready to drop with exhaustion. "I am so thirsty," she muttered, half fainting. "Give me a drink of water." Her servants frantically scurried around in search of water, but none could they find. "Whatever shall we do? Perhaps there's some in the packhorse train," they told each other; but the packhorses were not in sight, having lagged far behind. The lady seemed to be in a critical condition, and the servants were at their wits' end, not knowing which way to turn. The young samurai could see that the fuss was due to someone's thirst, and walked quietly up to the party. "Here's a man who will know where there's some water, surely. Is there anywhere around here where we can get some clean water?" asked the servants. "I don't think so," he answered, "not within a quarter of a mile or more. What is the matter?" "The reason we ask is that our mistress has walked so far that she is exhausted and needs a drink of water, but the trouble is, we haven't any." "How terrible for the poor lady," said the young samurai. "It's a long way to where you'll find water, and it will take you a long time to fetch any. How would these do?" and he gave them all three of the oranges in his bundle. Thanking him profusely, the retainers gave the oranges to their mistress to eat, and when she had finished them, she at last opened her eyes and asked what had happened.

"Your Ladyship was thirsty and asked for some water, then fell asleep. We looked but there was no clean water to be found. But out of the blue this man guessed what we wanted and presented us with those three oranges that we have just served you." "Did I faint from thirst, then? I remember asking for a drink of water but I don't recall anything after that. But for those oranges I should probably have died, out here in the country. What a blessing we met that man! Is he still here?" The servants said he was. "Ask him to stay a while," she said. "Whatever wonderful things happened, they would not help me much if I were dead. I'd like to reward him in some really satisfactory way—but what can we do, away from home like this? Have they got here with our food and other supplies yet? Give him something to eat." "Wait until the packhorses come up, then you can have a meal before you go," said the servants, and the man thanked them. When the pack train arrived with the stores and baggage, the men in charge of them were reprimanded. "Why were you lagging behind like that? The packhorses always ought to be out in front. What good is it if

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you're lagging behind when some emergency occurs?" At once canvas screens were set up and mats spread out. The servants decided that although there was no water within some distance, they ought to serve the lady's meal where they were, since she was tired, and they sent men to fetch water and had food prepared. Then they served the man a good meal, and as he ate he thought to himself, "I wonder what I shall get in place of those oranges. I'm sure I shan't be left empty-handed, since Kannon has a hand in this." Meanwhile, three rolls of fine white cloth were brought out and the lady ordered her men to present them to him. "I cannot thank you enough for those three oranges," she said. "But how can I give you any satisfactory reward out here away from home? This is only a small token of my gratitude." Giving him her address in the capital, she told him to visit her sometime, so that she could really show her gratitude for the three oranges. The samurai was very pleased to receive her gift, and happy that he had now got three rolls of cloth out of his one stalk of straw. Clutching them under his arm, he continued on his way, until night fell.

After spending the night at a house on the wayside, he rose at cockcrow to set off once more. The sun rose higher in the sky, then at about eight o'clock he met a man who was riding a remarkably fine horse but who was being so considerate to his mount that he was only dawdling along and making very little progress. "What a magnificent horse," thought the samurai. "This must be the kind of horse they talk of as 'worth a million.'" Suddenly the horse collapsed and in no time it was on the verge of death. The owner dismounted and stood there utterly bemused. His servants worked feverishly to remove the saddle and discussed what they could possibly do, but it was no use, for at length the horse died. The owner was completely distraught and almost in tears, but there was nothing for it but to mount an ordinary hack that they had with them.

"There's nothing I can do here, so I'll go on. Find some way to dispose of this," he ordered, and he rode off, leaving one of his lackeys with the horse. The watching samurai thought to himself, "This horse's death must mean that it is intended for me. My stalk of straw turned into three oranges and those into three rolls of cloth. It looks as if the cloth is meant to turn into a horse." He walked over to the man and said, "What happened to this horse?" "My master got it from Michinoku. Lots of people wanted it and offered to pay any price he cared to name, but he refused to part with it. Today, as you see, it died, and now he's ended up getting nothing at all for it, not even a low price. I wish I could at least strip its hide off, but I can't think how I can do that out here on the road. So I'm just standing here keeping an eye on it." "Yes, you're right," said the samurai. "I was just looking at it and thinking what a fine horse it was, when it came to this untimely end—truly you never know how long life will last. Certainly, though, when you're traveling, as you are, you wouldn't be able to dry the hide even if you did strip it off. But I live around here so I could strip the hide and make use of it. Why not let me have it?" With that he handed over a roll of cloth, and the lackey, congratulating himself on this unexpected

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windfall, hurriedly accepted the cloth and rushed off without so much as a backward glance, in case the samurai might change his mind. When he was sure the man had gone, the samurai washed his hands, and turning to face Hase, he prayed to Kannon to bring the horse back to life. The animal opened its eyes and at once lifted its head and tried to stand up. Gently the samurai put out his hand to help it. He was extraordinarily happy. Fearing that some straggler from the owner's party might come up, or the lackey return, he eventually led the horse into a less-exposed spot and let it rest for an hour or more, then when it had regained its strength, he took it to a house, where he used a roll of cloth to purchase a bridle and a cheap saddle, and rode off.

He headed for the capital, and had just reached Uji when darkness came down, so he stayed the night at a house, buying fodder for the horse and food for himself with his remaining roll of cloth. Early next morning, he went on up to the capital. In the neighborhood of Ninth Avenue, he noticed a house whose occupants seemed to be bustling around making ready for a journey. He reflected that if he took the horse into the capital someone might recognize it and he might be accused of having stolen it. Since it would have been a pity to have that happen, he decided to sell it, and on the assumption that the people at this house would have need of a horse, he dismounted and hastened over to ask if they would buy it. As it happened, the owner of the house had been wanting a horse, and he became very excited at the prospect of buying this animal. "I cannot pay you in silk at the moment," he said, "but will you let me have the horse in exchange for these Toba rice-fields and some rice?" That in fact seemed to the samurai a better bargain than the silk would have been. "It is silk and money that I really need," he said, "and as I'm away from home traveling, I don't know what use I could make of rice-fields. On the other hand, if the horse will be of use to you, I will do as you ask." The man tried the horse for himself and made it gallop. "It's just as I imagined," he said, and he presented the samurai with some seven acres of rice-fields in nearby Toba,[270] together with a few rice-plants and some rice. He also did not hesitate to entrust his house to the samurai. "If I live to come back to the capital," he said, "you can return it to me then. Until I do come back, you may live here yourself. If I should die, you can simply take the house for your own. I have no children, so that there will be no one to dispute your ownership." And with that, he left the capital. The samurai moved in, taking along with him the stock of rice and rice-plants he had been given. He was all on his own, but he had a supply of food. Men from the neighborhood came to work as servants, and he gradually became thoroughly settled in the house.

All this had happened in the Second Month. He had half the rice-fields he had been given cultivated on his own account and allowed others to cultivate

270. Toba is a district of modern Kyoto.

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(chapter 16), gambling (chapter 18), theft (chapter 19), celebration (chapter 20), lament (chapter 21), witty repartee (chapter 25), transformations (chapter 27), food (chapter 28), plants and trees (chapter 29), and fish, insects, and animals (chapter 30). This setsuwa collection, which reveals a strong nostalgia for Heian court culture, tries to give an encyclopedic view of aristocratic society, but at the same time, it reaches beyond that, particularly in the second half, to examine various aspects of contemporary commoner life. One of the characteristics of a *Kokon chomonjū* anecdote is the twist at the end.

The first example is from the Shinto chapter, which deals with the power of native deities (*kami*) and is a good example of an anecdote showing the merit or virtue of waka. The second example, from the martial bravery chapter, reveals the importance for warriors of *renga* (linked verse)—here a fourteen-syllable verse followed by a seventeen-syllable verse—which is composed even in the midst of a battle. One of the largest and most interesting chapters is that on humor or the "witty repartee" (*kyōgen rikō*), the latter half of which consists of a surprising number of erotic stories, from which the remaining three stories have been selected.

A Certain Woman in Retreat at Iwashimizu Composes a Poem and Is Blessed by the Gods (no. 173)

Not long ago there was a rather attractive gentlewoman. Although she had fallen on hard times, she had a daughter of great beauty and charm. Since the girl was now about seventeen or eighteen, she hoped she might somehow be able to place her respectably. In an excess of grief, she took her daughter on a pilgrimage to the Hachiman Shrine,[274] weeping all the way. Throughout the night, in the presence of the deity, she prayed, rubbing her rosary and weeping frantically. "For what may now become of me, I care naught. But for this daughter of mine, I pray that I might see her comfortably married."

Ever since their arrival, the daughter had been asleep, pillowed on her mother's knees, never stirring. When dawn broke, the mother said, "Here I am, so determined, and I walk all this way in such a dismal state of mind; but you, who should be praying the whole night through so that the god might take pity upon us, all you do is sleep, as if you didn't care what happened. It's just appalling."

While the mother grumbled, her daughter awoke. "I'm so dismal it hurts," she said, and then intoned a poem:

mi no usa o	This misery of mine,
nakanaka ni to	dreadful it is;

274. Iwashimizu Hachimangū, south of Kyoto, on top of Mount Otoko.

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Iwashimizu	yet surely the deity
omou kokoro wa	Iwashimizu must know
kumite shiruramu	and understand how I feel.

Her mother was put to shame and said nothing more as they departed. But when they reached the vicinity of Shichijō and Suzaku Avenues, they encountered a ranking nobleman, held in high regard at court, who was returning from an excursion in Katsura. He took the daughter into his carriage, thereupon made her his wife, and cared for her ever after. The Bodhisattva seems to have heeded her poem.

Minamoto Yoshiie Exchanges Verses with Abe Sadatō at Koromogawa (no. 336)

Lord Minamoto Yoriyoshi, governor of Iyo,[275] spent some twelve years in the province of Mutsu during his campaign against Abe Sadatō[276] and Abe Munetō.[277] When he set out from his headquarters en route to the fortress in Akita, it was snowing so heavily that the armor of the men in his force was turned as white as bleached linen.

The stronghold at Koromogawa stood on the far side of the river atop a tall embankment, and so they attacked, fashioning rafts and bracing their shields above their helmets. Sadatō was unable to hold and managed to slip out from the rear of the fortress. But Yoriie's first son, Hachimantarō Yoshiie,[278] chased after him and ran him down at the river.

"Base coward, you'd show your backs to us, would you? Well, turn around, just for a moment. I've something to say to you." When Sadatō looked back, Yoshiie said,

koromo no tate wa	Your robe is rent
hokorobinikeri	the full length of its warp.[279]

Sadatō relaxed his grip on the reins, turned his helmeted head about, and added,

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275. Minamoto no Yoriyoshi (988–1075).

276. Abe no Sadatō (d. 1062).

277. In the Heian period, the Abe clan, possibly descended from "barbarian" Ezo stock, ruled the northern reaches of the main island of Japan as far south as the Koromogawa, a small river that runs through Hiraizumi, in the southern part of present-day Iwate Prefecture. Because they repeatedly refused the government's commands to send tribute, pay taxes, provide corvee labor, appear at court, and so on, the court appointed Minamoto no Yoriyoshi to chastise them. The long and hard-fought military campaign that resulted, from 1051 to 1062, is sometimes called, as it is here, the Twelve Years' War.

278. Minamoto no Yoshiie (1039?–1106).

279. That is, your stronghold at Koromogawa, Robe River, has fallen.

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"Your breath smells horrid," he said.

The woman, still a bit drowsy, didn't realize that her own man had said this. Thinking it must be someone else, she replied, "Well you've got a nerve, neighbor, sticking your nose into other people's business."

Superb!

The Monk Who Fell in Love with a Perfectly Chaste Nun (no. 551)

Not long ago there lived a nun who had preserved her chastity throughout her entire life. She was still in the bloom of youth and rather good looking. Nor was she ill endowed in regard to more material assets.

Now a certain monk, while on a pilgrimage, chanced to catch a glimpse of this nun. He found her unendurably alluring, but what was he to do? Such was his infatuation that he followed her, so as to find out where she lived, but having gone that far, he could only turn heel and wend his way home again. Thereafter, however, there was no forgetting her. Day followed day and still the thought of her preyed relentlessly on him. And that convinced him. Come what may, and as the old poem says, "guided only by his secret yearnings,"[281] he would go in quest of his nun.

Now, as it happened this monk looked remarkably like a nun himself; which gave him the idea that he might masquerade as a woman, offer himself as a servant, and then await his chance.

When he announced himself at the gate, the prioress appeared and demanded to know who it was. The monk was terrified but somehow managed to quell his mounting fears.

"It's like this," he said. "I'm sure this will seem preposterous, but I'm looking for a place as a servant. You see, my husband, who's supported me all these years, has died. Now I'm all alone, and there is no one I can turn to. And on the day that he died, I shaved my head and became a nun; so now I'm unfit for ordinary service. But just possibly, I thought, I might find a place with religious folk such as your good selves."

This sounded preposterous indeed, but as chance would have it, they were in need of help just then. They had no way of knowing what this person might be up to, but she spoke plausibly enough. With no further ado they took her in. Thus far successful, the monk felt there might be some hope for the future.

Well, so energetic and willing a worker was she, they could hardly believe she was a woman. They could trust her with anything, even the heaviest of chores; they came to value her as one who could be assigned any task in the house.

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281. *The Tales of Ise*, sec. 99: "Know me, know me not—why make useless distinctions? One's yearnings must be one's only guide."

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to the Great Shrine of Ise and was praying, he received, as if in a dream, this revelation: "If you would give rise to a heart that follows the Way, you must not regard your body as a body."

Zōga was astonished and thought, "This means, 'Rid yourself of all desire for fame and fortune.' Well then, I shall do just that." So he took off his priestly robes and gave them all away to beggars. He did not keep even his unlined underrobe but left the shrine completely naked.

Those who saw him were amazed. They crowded around to look at him, exclaiming, "He's going mad. What a sad and dreadful sight!" But Zōga was not at all disturbed. He set out on his travels, begging as he went, and on the fourth day of the month again climbed the mountain to the chambers of Master Jie, where he had once lived.[284] It is said that some of his fellow monks watched him, thinking, "The son of the consultant has gone mad," while others viewed him with pity.

When no one was watching, the Master, who was Zōga's teacher, invited him in and admonished him, "You have learned that a person should disregard fame and fortune. Still, you shouldn't go to such extremes. Just behave properly, without desiring fame and fortune."

But Zōga replied, "This is the way that a person who has long ago completely abandoned desire for fame and fortune should behave." Then he cried out, "Oh, oh, I'm so happy," and ran off.

The Master, too, went out the gate and wept as he watched Zōga disappear in the distance.

Zōga wandered until at last he reached Tōnomine in Yamato. There he lived in the ruins of the hermitage in which Zen Master Chirō had dwelt.

Ambition for fame and fortune is fearful indeed. Grave troubles also result from the three poisons of greed, anger, and ignorance. We believe that our bodies really exist, and so we create many other fictions to support them. Men born into military families wage war; fitting arrows to the bowstring in quick succession and wielding their long swords, they lose their lives in quest of the glory and gain that come from overpowering others. Women paint on fine, willow-leaf brows and perfume their robes with orchid and musk, calculating that their appearance will dispel the last traces of the autumn breezes of their lovers' fickleness, and they, too, do this for no other reason than glory and fortune.

Furthermore, there are those who don the drab, dark robes of a priest and, fingering their rosary beads, preach to people as a way of supporting themselves. Or else they aspire to the highest rank and office in the hope that they will sit

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284. Jie Daishi (Master Jie) was the posthumous name of Ryōgen (912–985). He is noted for his treatise *Sōmoku hosshin shugyō jōbutsu ki*, which teaches that nonsentient things, such as plants, possess buddhahood. He appears in many setsuwa.

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with nobles at religious assemblies and be honored by three thousand disciples. They, too, are not free from the desire for fame and profit.

But in addition to those who are not aware of this truth, there also are people who have seen the Yuishiki and Shikan texts[285] and have the capacity to understand the ultimate truths of the scriptures. Despite this, they do not reject fame and fortune and so remain drifting in the ocean of birth and death. Everyone who tries to discard his reputation finds it difficult to change a habit of many lifetimes. It is truly wonderful that the Venerable Zōga was finally able to discard all longing for fame and fortune. How could he have ever reached that resolve without the aid of the Great Shrine of Ise? How impressive and awesome it is that a man in the eternal night of worldly desires was cleansed by the waves of the Isuzu River[286] and that the clustered clouds of greed, anger, and ignorance vanished in the light of Amaterasu, the Sun Goddess. This incident should never be forgotten.

[Translated by Jean Moore]

The Woman of Pleasure at Eguchi (9:8)

Once around the twentieth of the Ninth Month, as I passed by a place called Eguchi, the sight of houses squeezed together on the north and south banks of the river and the hearts of the pleasure women set on the comings and goings of travelers made me think, "How pitiful and hopeless!" As I was thus gazing at the scene, an unseasonably wintry shower suddenly darkened the skies, so I approached the dwelling of one of these unseemly folk and asked for shelter until the skies cleared, but because the woman of pleasure of the house showed no sign of letting me in, I casually recited the following:

yo no naka o	It may be difficult
itou made koso	for you to despise
katakarame	this fleeting world,
kari no yadori o	but you begrudge me
oshimu kimi kana	even momentary lodging!

The woman of pleasure of the house then replied despairingly:

ie o izuru	Because I heard
hito to shi kikeba	that you had taken vows

285. Yuishiki, "Consciousness Only" or "Mere Ideation," is the teaching of the Hossō sect, which attributes the existence of the outer world to inner ideation. Shikan, "Concentration and Insight," is a teaching propounded by Zhiyi (538–597), founder of the Tiantai (Tendai) sect, according to which meditation allows insight and the realization of truth.

286. A clear stream that flows through the Ise Shrine. Visitors rinse their hands and mouth in its waters as a ritual of purification.

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of the Dharma"?[290] If I had not recited my poem, "but you begrudge me even momentary lodging," this woman of pleasure probably would not have given me shelter. And so how else should I have met this wonderful person? How glad I was, for thanks to this lady my heart was inspired in a small way for a moment, and why shouldn't this, in some small way, cause the seed of unsurpassed enlightenment to sprout?

Now, in the promised month, just as I was thinking I should visit her, a certain holy man came from the capital, and so I was completely distracted. Disappointed at my failed intentions, I related the situation to someone I could trust and then wrote a letter to send with which I included the following:

karisome no	"Don't leave any
yo ni wa omoi o	thoughts behind
nokosu na to	in this fleeting world!"
kikishi koto no ha	These words I heard
wasurare mo sezu	have not been forgotten.

After sending this, the following reply came with her letter:

wasurezu to	"Not forgotten,"
mazu kiku kara ni	as soon as I heard this
sode nurete	my sleeves were wet.
waga mi mo itou	I too despise
yume no yo no naka	this world of dreams.

At the end she had also written, "I have changed my appearance,[291] and yet my heart remains unchanged," to which she added:

kami oroshi	I've cut my hair
koromo no iro wa	and the color of my robes
somenuredo	has changed.[292]
nao tsurenaki wa	What remains the same, though,
kokoro narikeri	is my heart.

When I read this, for some reason the tears flowed so freely that my sleeves could not absorb them all. Such a remarkable woman of pleasure she was!

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290. "Wild words and decorative phrases" (*kyōgen kigo*) was a phrase coined by the eighth-century Chinese poet Bo Juyi (see p. 291, n. 305).

291. She means that she has become a nun, cutting her hair and wearing dark robes.

292. The implication is that the robes have been dyed a darker hue than before. To highlight the contrast between the changed color of the robes and the unchanged heart, the verb *somu* (to dye) has been translated here as "change."

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Such women of pleasure usually hope to become familiar with someone who would love them, but she distanced herself from such desires and devoted herself with all her heart to the next world—how could this not be rare and wonderful? Surely this was not the result of just a little good karma here and there. Although her many observations of the precepts had accumulated over many lives and had been blessed by the waters of Eguchi, even her poetry was remarkable. "In the evening I think, *when the night has passed* . . . and at dawn I weep, thinking, *when the day comes* . . . " So she told me, and yet I wonder whether those sentiments continue? No, for she has become a nun![293] I wanted to visit her after she had taken vows, but when I heard that she no longer lived in Eguchi after becoming a nun, my hopes in the end were in vain. Quite often I can't help but wonder what that woman of pleasure's final moments must have been like.

[Translated by Jack Stoneman]

MUJŪ ICHIEN

Mujū Ichien (1226–1312), the author and editor of the *Collection of Sand and Pebbles* (*Shasekishū*, 1279–1283), was born in Kamakura, studied Zen Buddhism, and took holy vows at the age of eighteen. He did not belong to a specific Buddhist sect but instead studied widely at various temples. He did, however, have a particular interest in Shingon esoteric Buddhism and appears to have been influenced by Ryōbu Shinto, which viewed the world of *kami* (native gods) from a Shingon perspective. Indeed, the *Collection of Sand and Pebbles* begins with a story about the Ise Shrine. This mixture or fusion of Shinto and Buddhist thought was one reason for the story's popularity and wide appeal. In 1262, Mujū became the head of the Chōbo-ji temple in Owari (now Nagoya), where he spent the next fifty years. He is best known as the editor of setsuwa collections, particularly the *Collection of Random Conversations* (*Zōtanshū*, 1304–1305) and the *Collection of Sand and Pebbles*.

COLLECTION OF SAND AND PEBBLES (*SHASEKISHŪ*, 1279–1283)

The *Collection of Sand and Pebbles* consists of ten volumes of setsuwa. After editing the collection, Mujū revised and rewrote a number of the setsuwa himself, often with the intention of making difficult Buddhist doctrine easier to understand. Some of the setsuwa also are stories about everyday life, with humor, wordplay, and comic

293. The narrator is paraphrasing the words of the *yūjo* from the conversation they had earlier, in which she said: " . . . in the evening I think to myself, 'What will become of me when this night passes?' And with the break of dawn I think, 'Once this night has passed I'll take on a nun's appearance and make my resolve.'"

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te ni musubu	Like the moon
mizu ni yadoreru	reflected on the water
tsuki kage wa	cupped in my hands,
aru ka naki ka no	is it real or not—
yo ni mo sumu kana	this world in which we live?

The assistant high priest was deeply impressed and moved by the appropriate spirit and style of the verse. Subsequently he retained the page, and he himself came to love poetry. His verse can be found in the collections of many reigns.

According to another tradition, Genshin heard the page recite this poem on seeing a boat moving on Lake Biwa in Ōmi:

yo no naka o	To what shall I
nani ni tatoemu	compare this human life?
asaborake	To the white wake
kogiyuku fune no	of a boat rowing away
ato no shiranami	at the break of dawn.[295]

It is said that Genshin thus came to love poetry. The earlier verse was written when Tsurayuki[296] was depressed by a serious illness; the latter is a poem by Manzei.[297] In a most appropriate spirit the poets composed these old verses, both of which are in the *Shūishū*.[298]

The assistant high priest also composed this verse:

urayamashi	As the moon
ikanaru sora no	for every season,
tsuki nareba	how enviable
kokoro no mama ni	that it moves as it pleases
nishi ni yukuran	toward the Western Paradise.

Now we refer to the poetry of "wild words and decorative phrases" as "defiled poetry," because it lures us to attachment, imbues us with vain sensuality, and decks us out with empty words. But poetry may express the principles of the Holy Teaching, accompany a sense of impermanence, weaken our worldly ties and profane thoughts, and cause us to forget fame and profit. If, on seeing the

295. *Shūishū*, vol. 20, no. 1327. A later reworking of the famous waka by Sami Manzei (ca. 720), from the *Man'yōshū*, vol. 3, no. 351.

296. Ki no Tsurayuki (868–945), a noted waka poet and chief editor of the *Kokinshū* (ca. 905).

297. Manzei, or Sami Manzei, a noted *Man'yōshū* poet of the mid-Nara period.

298. The *Shūishū*, the third imperial waka anthology, compiled in the early eleventh century under the direction of Fujiwara no Kintō (966–1041).

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dharani." Had the Buddha appeared in Japan, he would simply have used Japanese for mystic verses.

[Translated by Robert Morrell]

WARRIOR TALES (*GUNKI-MONO*)

Warrior tales or chronicles (*gunki* or *gunki-mono*) are one of the main genres of medieval literature. In *Notes on Foolish Views* (*Gukanshō*), written in the early Kamakura period, Jien (1155–1225) distinguishes between historical chronicles like *The Great Mirror* (*Ōkagami*) and those that describe the world of warriors and battle.

The first period of warrior tales is the mid-Heian, beginning with the *Record of Masakado* (*Shōmonki*, ca. 940) and the *Record of the Deep North* (*Mutsuwaki*, ca. 1062), both written in kanbun by Buddhist monks or middle-rank intellectuals. *Shōmonki* describes the uprising by Taira no Masakado (d. 940) and reveals the attempt to save his spirit from hell.

The second period began with texts like *The Tales of Heiji* (*Heiji monogatari*, 1221?), *The Tales of Hōgen* (*Hōgen monogatari*, 1221?), and *The Tales of the Heike* (*Heike monogatari*, mid-thirteenth century), marking the transition from the early period to medieval warrior society. Both *Hōgen monogatari* and *Heiji monogatari*, which describe military conflicts leading up to the Genpei war, resemble *Shōmonki* and *Mutsuwaki* as narratives about warriors who caused major disturbances. But in contrast to *Shōmonki* and *Mutsuwaki*, which are "records" (*ki*) written in kanbun (Chinese prose) with a documentary focus, *Hōgen monogatari* and *Heiji monogatari* have the quality of Heian monogatari in trying to re-create the interior life of the participants. The perspective of *Shōmonki* and *Mutsuwaki* was of those at the center looking out at the rebels in the provinces, whereas the military narratives in the second period (such as *The Tales of the Heike*) were written or recited from the perspective of those who had sometimes experienced the war at first hand or who sympathized with the fate of the defeated warriors. These texts were written in the so-called mixed Japanese–Chinese style, which combines Japanese prose and Chinese compounds and phrases, including allusions to Chinese classics and history.

The Rise and Fall of the Genji and the Heike (*Genpei seisuiki* or *Genpei jōsuiki*) describes *Hōgen monogatari* and *Heiji monogatari* as "diaries [*nikki*] of the Hōgen and Heiji periods," revealing that in the Kamakura period they were still considered to be reliable records of events, despite their monogatari character. Like other military narratives, *Hōgen monogatari* and *Heiji monogatari* include setsuwa, following a tradition that goes back to the late Heian *Collection of Tales of Times Now Past* (*Konjaku monogatari shū*), which devotes one volume to warrior stories. Most of the military narratives have three parts, describing the causes of the military conflict, the conflict itself, and the aftermath, a structure apparent in *The Tales of Hōgen* and *The Tales of Heiji*.

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recited material (*katari-mono*) performed by *biwa hōshi* (blind lute minstrels) or storytelling monks (*monogatari sō*) attached to armies. *Hōgen monogatari*, *Heiji monogatari*, and *Heike monogatari* were recited by biwa hōshi, and the *Taiheiki* and the *Meitokuki* were recited by monogatari sō.

These warrior tales, which belonged to performative traditions, later were heavily used and absorbed by other genres such as nō, kōwakamai, otogi-zōshi (Muromachi tales), jōruri, kabuki, Tokugawa fiction, and modern novels.

Chronology of Major Incidents in Warrior Tales

Jōhei–Tengyō disturbance (935–941)	*Shōmonki*
Hōgen disturbance (1156)	*Hōgen monogatari*
Heiji disturbance (1159)	*Heiji monogatari*
Struggle between Heike and Genji lineages (1180), with Heike destroyed at Dan-no-ura (1185)	*Heike monogatari*
Jōkyū disturbance (1221)	*Jōkyūki*
Kenmu restoration (1334), with Ashikaga Takauji as Seii taishogun (barbarian-subduing generalissimo) (1338)	*Taiheiki*

THE TALES OF THE HEIKE (*HEIKE MONOGATARI*, MID-THIRTEENTH CENTURY)

The Tales of the Heike is about the Genpei war (1180–1185), fought between the Heike (Taira) lineage, led by Taira no Kiyomori, and the Genji (Minamoto) lineage, whose head became Minamoto no Yoritomo. The Taira's initial, rapid ascent to power was followed by a series of defeats, including their abandonment of the capital in 1183 (taking with them Antoku, the child emperor). By 1183 Yoritomo had gained control of the Kantō, or eastern, region; Kiso no Yoshinaka, another Minamoto leader, had brought Kyoto under his power; and the Taira had fallen back to the Inland Sea. In an interlude of fighting among the Minamoto, Yoritomo and his half brother (Minamoto) Yoshitsune defeated Yoshinaka in 1184. In a decisive battle at Ichi-no-tani in 1184, near the present-day city of Kobe, Yoshitsune, leading the Minamoto forces, decisively turned back the Taira, driving them into the Inland Sea. Finally, in 1185, the last of the Taira forces were crushed at Dan-no-ura, in a sea battle at the western end of the Inland Sea. In the same year, Rokudai, the last potential heir of the Taira clan, was captured and eventually executed.

This war between the Taira and the Minamoto marked the beginning of the medieval period and also became the basis for *The Tales of the Heike*, which focuses on the lives of various warriors from both military houses, particularly those of the defeated. The narrative also includes numerous non-samurai stories drawn from anecdotes (setsuwa), many of which deal with women and priests, that were frequently transformed by the composers of the *Heike* into Buddhist

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narratives, much like the anecdotes in Buddhist setsuwa collections. Therefore, even though *The Tales of the Heike* is a military epic, it has strong Buddhist overtones, which are especially evident in the opening passage on impermanence, in many of the stories of Buddhistic disillusionment and awakening (such as those about Giō or Koremori), and in the final "Initiates' Book" (Kanjō no maki) leading to the salvation of Kenreimon'in, the daughter of Kiyomori, who has a vision of the fall of her clan.

The first variants of *The Tales of the Heike* were probably recorded by writers and priests associated with Buddhist temples who may have incorporated Buddhist readings and other folk material into an earlier chronological, historically oriented narrative. These texts, in turn, were recited from memory, accompanied by a lute (*biwa*) played by blind minstrels (referred to as *biwa hōshi*), who entertained a broad commoner audience and had an impact on subsequent variants of *The Tales of the Heike*, which combined both literary texts and orally transmitted material. The many variants of *The Tales of the Heike* differ significantly in content and style, but the most famous today is the Kakuichi text, part of which is translated here. This variant was recorded in 1371 by a man named Kakuichi, a biwa hōshi who created a twelve-book narrative shaped around the decline of the Heike (Taira) clan. At some point "The Initiates' Book," which unifies the long work and gives it closure as a Buddhist text, was added, as well as sections that were inspired by Heian monogatari and centered on women and the private life of the court.

Thanks largely to Kakuichi, the oral biwa performance of *The Tales of the Heike* eventually won upper-class acceptance and became a major performing art, reaching its height in the mid-fifteenth century. After the Ōnin war (1467–1477), the biwa performance declined in popularity and was replaced by other performance arts, such as nō and kyōgen (comic drama), but *The Tales of the Heike* continued to serve as a rich source for countless dramas and prose narratives. Indeed, most of the sixteen warrior pieces (*shuramono*) in today's nō drama repertoire are from *The Tales of the Heike*. *Heike* heroes began appearing in the ballad dramas (*kōwakamai*) in the sixteenth century, and in the Tokugawa period, stories from *The Tales of the Heike* became the foundation for a number of important kabuki and jōruri (puppet) plays, thus making it one of the most influential works of premodern Japanese culture.

The first half of the *Heike*, books one through six, relates the history of Kiyomori, the head of the Taira (Heike) clan, who comes into conflict with the retired emperor GoShirakawa and then with various members of the Minamoto (Genji) clan. The second half, books seven through twelve, is about three important Minamoto (Genji) leaders: Yoritomo, the head of the Genji in the east; Yoshinaka, who becomes a Genji leader farther to the west; and Yoshitsune, Yoritomo's brother. However, the real focus of the narrative is not on the Genji victors—in fact, Yoritomo, the ultimate victor, plays almost a peripheral role—but on a series of defeated Taira figures: Shigemori, Shigehira, Koremori, Munemori, and Kenreimon'in—all descendants of Kiyomori—who, bearing the sins

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of the forefather, suffer different fates on their way to death. In short, in the first half, *The Tales of the Heike* centers on the Taira, on Kiyomori, the clan leader, and, in the second half, on the various defeated Taira, almost all of whom die or are executed. (Also important in the second half is the fall of the former Genji leader, Kiso Yoshinaka, who is defeated by Yoritomo.) It is not until "The Initiates' Book" that the tragedy of the Taira becomes an opportunity for reconciliation, between Kenreimon'in, Kiyomori's daughter, and the retired emperor GoShirakawa, who had been victimized by Kiyomori.

Key Figures

Imperial Family

ANTOKU (r. 1180–1185): emperor and son of Emperor Takakura and Kenreimon'in; is held by the Taira clan and drowns at Dan-no-ura.

GOSHIRAKAWA (1127–1192, r. 1155–1158): retired emperor, head of the imperial clan, and son of Retired Emperor Toba.

KENREIMON'IN (1155–1213): daughter of Kiyomori and Tokiko (Nun of the Second Rank), consort of Emperor Takakura, mother of Emperor Antoku, and full sister of Munemori, Tomomori, and Shigehira; is taken prisoner at Dan-no-ura and dies a nun.

MOCHIHITO, PRINCE (1151–1180): second son of Retired Emperor GoShirakawa and leader of an anti-Taira revolt in 1180; also called Prince Takakura.

NUN OF THE SECOND RANK: principal wife of Kiyomori and mother of Munemori, Shigehira, and Kenreimon'in; dies at Dan-no-ura.

TAKAKURA: emperor and son of Retired Emperor GoShirakawa.

TOBA: retired emperor and father of Retired Emperor GoShirakawa.

Taira (Heike)

ATSUMORI: nephew of Kiyomori; dies at Ichi-no-tani.

KIYOMORI: son of Tadamori and, after his father's death, Taira clan head; dominates the court even after taking vows.

KOREMORI: eldest son of Shigemori; commits suicide after taking vows.

MUNEMORI: son of Kiyomori and Nun of the Second Rank and, after Shigemori's death, Taira clan head.

ROKUDAI: son of Koremori, grandson of Shigemori, and presumptive Taira clan head after the Genpei war.

SHIGEHIRA: son of Kiyomori and Nun of the Second Rank; a Taira leader largely responsible for the burning of Nara; captured at Ichi-no-tani and later executed.

SHIGEMORI: eldest son of Kiyomori and, until his early death, a restraining influence on Kiyomori.

TADAMORI: father of Kiyomori and a former Taira clan head.

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that what flourishes must fade.[304] The proud do not prevail for long, but vanish like a spring night's dream. The mighty too in time succumb: all are dust before the wind.

Long ago in a different land, Zhao Gao of the Qin dynasty in China, Wang Mang of the Han, Zhu Yi of the Liang, and An Lushan of the Tang all refused to be governed by former sovereigns. Pursuing every pleasure, deaf to admonitions, unaware of the chaos overtaking the realm, ignorant of the sufferings of the common people, before long they all alike met their downfall.

More recently in our own country there have been men like Masakado, Sumitomo, Gishin, and Nobuyori, each of them proud and fierce to the extreme. The tales told of the most recent of such men, Taira no Kiyomori, the lay priest of Rokuhara and at one time the prime minister, are beyond the power of words to describe or the mind to imagine.

Kiyomori was the oldest son and heir of Taira no Tadamori, the minister of punishments, and the grandson of Masamori, the governor of Sanuki. Masamori was a ninth-generation descendant of Prince Kazurahara, a first-rank prince and the minister of ceremonies, the fifth son of Emperor Kanmu.

KIYOMORI'S FLOWERING FORTUNES (1:5)

Not only did Kiyomori himself climb to the pinnacle of success, but all the members of his family enjoyed great good fortune as well. Kiyomori's eldest son, Shigemori, became a palace minister and a major captain of the left; his second son, Munemori, became a junior counselor and a major captain of the right; his third son, Tomomori, rose to the level of middle captain of the third court rank; and his grandson, Shigemori's heir Koremori, rose to that of lesser captain of the fourth court rank. In all, sixteen members of the family became high-ranking officials; more than thirty were courtiers; and a total of more than sixty held posts as provincial governors, guards officers, or officials in the central bureaucracy. It seemed as though there were no other family in the world but this one. . . .

In addition, Kiyomori had eight daughters, all of whom fared well in life. . . . One of them was made the consort of Emperor Takakura and bore him a son who became crown prince and then emperor, at which time she received the title of Kenreimon'in. Daughter of the lay priest and the prime minister, mother of the ruler of the realm, nothing further need be said about her good fortune. . . .

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304. The Buddha is said to have died under sala trees, at which time the trees' blossoms, ordinarily yellow, turned white to express their grief.

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Kiyomori's expectations, and he was so moved by her performance that he immediately fell in love with her.

"This is somewhat troubling," said Hotoke. "Originally I was not to be admitted but was sent away at once. But through the kind offices of Lady Giō, I was allowed to present myself. Having done so, I would be most reluctant to do anything that would counter Lady Giō's intentions. I beg to be excused as soon as possible so that I may be on my way."

"There is no reason for that!" replied Kiyomori. "But if you feel uneasy in Giō's presence, I will see that she leaves."

"But how would that look?" objected Hotoke. "I was uneasy enough to find that the two of us had been summoned here together. If now, after all her kindness, she were dismissed and I were to remain behind, think how dreadful I would feel! If by chance you happen to remember me, perhaps you might summon me again at some future time. But for today I beg to take my leave."

Kiyomori, however, would not hear of this. "Nonsense!" he said. "You will do no such thing. Have Giō leave at once!"

Three times he sent an attendant with these instructions.

Giō had long been aware that something like this might happen, but she was not expecting it "this very day."[306] But faced with repeated orders to leave the house at once, she resigned herself to doing so and set about sweeping and tidying her room and clearing it of anything unsightly.

Even those who have only sought shelter under the same tree for a night or have merely dipped water from the same stream will feel sorrow on parting. How sorrowful, then, Giō's departure must have been from the place where she had lived these three years. Her tears, futile though they were, fell quickly. Since there was nothing she could do, however, she prepared to depart. But perhaps wanting to leave behind some reminder of herself, she inscribed the following poem on the sliding panel of the room, weeping as she did so:

> Those that put out new shoots, those that wither are the same
> grasses of the field—come autumn, is there one that will not fade?

Getting into her carriage, she returned to her home and there, sinking down within the panels of the room, began weeping.

"What has happened? What is wrong?" her mother and sister asked, but she did not reply. It was only when they questioned the maid who had accompanied her that they learned the truth.

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306. This is an allusion to Ariwara no Narihira's death poem, which appears in both the *Kokinshū* (no. 861) and the final section of *The Tales of Ise*: "I had heard there is a path that all must follow but didn't think yesterday that I'd be going today."

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Before long, the monthly stipend of a hundred piculs of rice and a hundred strings of coins ended, and for the first time Hotoke's friends and relations learned the meaning of happiness and prosperity. Among high and low, word spread throughout the capital. "They say that Giō has been dismissed from the prime minister's service," people said. "We must go call on her and keep her company!" Some sent letters, others dispatched their servants to make inquiries. But faced with such a situation, Giō could not bring herself to receive visitors. The letters she refused to accept; the messengers she sent off without a meeting. Such gestures served only to deepen her mood of melancholy, and she passed all her time weeping. In this way the year came to an end.

The following spring Kiyomori sent a servant to Giō's house with this message: "How have you been since we parted? Lady Hotoke appears to be so hopelessly bored that I wish you would come and perform one of your *imayō* songs or your dances to cheer her up."

Giō declined to give any answer.

Kiyomori tried again. "Why no answer from you, Giō? Won't you come for a visit? Tell me if you won't come! I have ways of dealing with the matter!"

When Giō's mother, Toji, learned about this, she was very upset and, having no idea what to do, could only plead tearfully with her daughter. "Giō, at least send an answer," she begged. "Anything is better than being threatened!"

But Giō replied, "If I had any intention of going, I would have answered long ago. It is because I have no such intention that I'm at a loss as to how to reply. He says that if I do not respond, he has ways of dealing with the matter. Does this mean I will be banished from the capital? Or that I will be put to death? Even if I were expelled from the capital, I would have no great regrets. And if he wants to deprive me of my life, what of that? He once sent me away a despised person—I have no heart to face him again." She thus refused to send an answer.

But the mother continued begging. "As long as you continue to live in this realm, you cannot hope to defy the prime minister's wishes! The ties that bind man and woman are decreed from a past existence—they do not originate in this life alone. Those who vow to be faithful for a thousand or ten thousand years often end by parting, whereas those who think of this as merely an affair of the moment find themselves spending their whole lives together. In this world of ours there's no predicting how things will turn out between a man and a woman.

"For three whole years you enjoyed favor with the prime minister. That was a stroke of fortune hardly to be matched. Now if you refuse to answer his summons, it is scarcely likely you will be put to death. Probably you will merely be banished from the capital. And even if you are banished, you and your sister are young and can manage to live even in the wildest and most out-of-the-way spot. But what about your mother? I am a feeble old woman—suppose I am

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banished too? Just the thought of living in some strange place in the countryside fills me with despair. Let me live out the rest of my days here in the capital. Think of it as being filial in this world and the next."

Much as it pained her, Giō did not feel that she could disobey these pleas from her mother, and so weeping all the while, she set out for the prime minister's mansion. But her heart was filled with foreboding. It would be too difficult to make the trip alone, Giō felt, and therefore she took her younger sister, Ginyo, with her, as well as two other *shirabyōshi* dancers, the four of them going in one carriage to Nishi-hachijō.

Upon her arrival, Giō was not shown to the seat she had previously been accustomed to occupy, but instead to a far inferior place where makeshift arrangements had been made. "How can this be?" she exclaimed. "Although I was guilty of no fault, I was driven out of the house. And now I find that even the seat I had occupied has been demoted! This is too heartless! What am I to do?" In an effort to hide her confusion, she covered her face with her sleeve, but the trickle of tears gave her away.

Moved to pity by the sight, Lady Hotoke appealed to Kiyomori. "What is the meaning of this?" she asked. "If this were someone who had never been summoned before, it might be different. But surely she should be seated here with us. If not, I beg your permission to go where she is."

"That will not be necessary!" replied Kiyomori, and Hotoke was thus helpless to move.

Later, Kiyomori, apparently quite unaware of Giō's feelings, asked how she had been faring since they met last. "Lady Hotoke seems so terribly bored," he remarked. "You must sing us an *imayō*."

Having come this far, Giō did not feel that she could disregard the prime minister's wishes. And so holding back her tears, she sang the following song in the *imayō* style:

> Buddha was once a common mortal,
> and we too one day will become buddhas.
> All alike endowed with the Buddha nature,
> how sad this gulf that divides us!

Weeping all the while, she sang the song two more times. All the members of the Taira clan who were present, from the ministers of state, lords, and high-ranking courtiers down to the lowly samurai, were moved to tears. Kiyomori himself listened with keen interest. "A song admirably suited to the occasion," he commented. "I wish we could watch you dance, but unfortunately today there are other things to be attended to. In the future you must not wait to be summoned but come any time you like and perform your *imayō* songs and dances for Hotoke's amusement."

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come with his sacred host to greet us. And then surely he will guide us to his Western Paradise. Come, let us take heart and not delay pronouncing his name!"

When they had thus reassured one another and mustered the courage to open the bamboo door, they discovered that it was no demon at all but Lady Hotoke who stood before them.

"What do I see?" said Giō. "Lady Hotoke! Am I dreaming or awake?"

"If I tell you what has happened, I may seem merely to be making excuses," said Lady Hotoke, straining to hold back her tears. "But it would be too unkind to remain silent, and so I will start from the beginning. As you know, I was not originally summoned to the prime minister's house but went of my own accord, and if it had not been for your kind intervention, I would never have been admitted. We women are frail beings and cannot always do as we wish. I was far from happy when the prime minister detained me at his mansion, and then when you were summoned again and sang your *imayō* song, I felt more than ever the impossibility of my position. I could take no delight in it because I knew that sooner or later my turn would come to fall from favor. I felt it even more when I saw the poem you wrote on the sliding panel with its warning that 'come autumn, all alike must fade!'

"After that, I lost track of your whereabouts. But when I heard that you and your mother and sister all had entered religious life, I was overcome with envy. Again and again I asked the prime minister to release me from service, but he would not hear of it.

"What joy and delight we have in this world is no more than a dream within a dream, I told myself—what could such happiness mean to me? It is a rare thing to be born a human being and rarer still to discover the teachings of the Buddha. If because of my actions now I were to be reborn in hell or to spend endless aeons transmigrating through the other realms of existence, when would I ever find salvation? My youth could not be counted on, that I knew, for neither young nor old can tell when death may overtake them. One may breathe one instant and then not live to breathe the next: life is as fleeting as the shimmering heat of summer or a flash of lightning. To revel in a moment's happiness and not be heedful of the life to come would be a pitiful course of action indeed! So this morning I stole away from the prime minister's mansion and have come here."

With these words she threw off the cloak that she had around her. She had assumed a nun's tonsure and habit.

"I have come dressed in this fashion," she told them, "because I wish to ask pardon for my past offenses. If you say you can forgive me, I would like to join you in your devotions, and perhaps we may be reborn on a single lotus leaf in the Western Paradise. But if you cannot bring yourself to forgive me, I will make my way elsewhere. Wherever I may settle, on a bed of moss or by the roots of a pine tree, I will devote what life is left to me to reciting the Buddha's name, hoping, as I have done for so long, for rebirth in his paradise."

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Kiyomori moves the capital to Fukuhara, an isolated area west of the capital (near present-day Kobe), causing considerable hardship. The Taira, led by Koremori and Tadanori, gather troops and march against Yoritomo in the east. However, the Taira army, which has been put on edge by stories of the easterners' martial prowess, scatters in fear when a flock of birds suddenly takes flight at Fuji River. Kiyomori moves the capital back to its earlier location, which again causes havoc.

THE BURNING OF NARA (5:14)

In the capital, people were saying, "When Prince Takakura went to Onjō-ji, the monks of Kōfuku-ji in Nara not only expressed sympathy with his cause but even went to Onjō-ji to greet him. In doing so they showed themselves to be enemies of the state. Both Kōfuku-ji and Onjō-ji will surely be attacked!"

When rumors of this kind reached the monks of Kōfuku-ji, they rose up like angry hornets. Regent Fujiwara no Motomichi assured them that "if you have any sentiments you wish to convey to the throne, I will act as your intermediary on whatever number of occasions may be required." But such assurances had no effect whatsoever.

Motomichi dispatched Tadanori, the superintendent of the Kangaku-in, to act as his emissary, but the monks met him with wild clamor, shouting, "Drag the wretch from his carriage! Cut off his topknot!" Tadanori fled back to the capital, his face white with terror. Motomichi then sent Assistant Gate Guards Commander Chikamasa, but the monks greeted him in similar fashion, yelling, "Cut off his topknot!" He dropped everything and fled back to the capital. On that occasion, two lackeys from the Kangaku-in had their topknots cut off.

In addition, the Nara monks made a big ball, of the kind used in New Year's games, dubbed it "Prime Minister Kiyomori's head," and yelled, "Hit it! Stomp on it!" Easy talk is the midwife of disaster, and incautious action is the highway to ruin, people say.[310] This prime minister, Kiyomori, as the maternal grandfather of the reigning emperor, was someone to be spoken of with the utmost respect. It seemed as though only the Devil of the Sixth Heaven[311] could have inspired the Nara monks to use such language in referring to him.

When news of these events reached Prime Minister Kiyomori, he began making plans to deal with the situation. In order to bring an immediate halt to the unruly doings in Nara, he appointed Senoo Kaneyasu as the chief of police of Yamato Province, where Nara is situated, and sent him with a force of five

310. This is a reference to *Chengui*, a Tang-period ethical text.

311. According to Buddhist cosmology, the Devil of the Sixth Heaven is the lord of the highest of the six realms of desire and, together with his followers, hinders people from adhering to Buddhism.

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hundred horsemen under his command. "Even if your opponents resort to violence, you must not retaliate in kind!" he warned the men when they set off. "Do not wear armor or helmets, and do not carry bows and arrows!"

But the Nara monks were not, of course, aware of Kiyomori's private instructions, and, seizing some sixty of Kaneyasu's men who had become separated from the main force, they cut off their heads and hung them in a row around the border of Sarusawa Pond.

Enraged at this, Kiyomori commanded, "Very well, then, attack Nara!"

He dispatched a force of more than forty thousand horsemen to carry out the attack, with Shigehira as commander in chief and Michimori as second in command. Meanwhile more than seven thousand monks, both old and young, had put on helmets and dug trenches across the road at two places, one at the slope called Narazaka and the other at Hannya-ji temple, and fortified them with barricades of shields and thorned branches. There they awaited the attackers.

The Heike, their forty thousand men split into two parties, swept down on the two fortified points at Narazaka and Hannya-ji, shouting their battle cries. All the monks were on foot and armed with swords. The government forces, being mounted, could thus charge back and forth among them, chasing some this way, driving others that, showering arrows down on them until countless numbers had been felled. The ceremonial exchange of arrows signaling the start of hostilities took place at six in the morning, and the battle continued throughout the day. By evening, both the fortified points at Narazaka and Hannya-ji had been captured. . . .

The fighting continued into the night. Darkness having fallen, the Heike commander in chief, Shigehira, who was standing in front of the gate of Hannya-ji temple, called for torches to be lit. A certain Tomokata, a minor overseer of the Fukui estate in Harima, broke his shield in two and, using it as a torch, set fire to one of the commoners' houses in the area. It was the twenty-eighth night of the Twelfth Month and a strong wind was blowing. Although only one fire had been set, it was blown by the wind this way and that until it had spread to many of the temples in the vicinity.

By this time, those monks who were ashamed to be thought cowardly and who cared what kind of name they left behind them had died in the fighting at Narazaka or Hannya-ji. Those who could still use their legs fled in the direction of Mount Yoshino and Totsukawa. The older monks who were unable to walk any great distance, along with the special students in training at the temples, the acolytes, and the women and children all fled as fast as they could to Kōfuku-ji or Tōdai-ji, some thousand or more persons climbing up to the second story of the latter temple's Hall of the Great Buddha. To prevent any of their pursuers from reaching them, they then threw down the ladders by which they had ascended. When the flames from the fire came roaring down on them, their shrieks and cries could hardly have been surpassed by even those of the

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by the gate of Hannya-ji, while the heads of others were carried back to the capital.

On the twenty-ninth day of the month that the commander in chief, Taira no Shigehira, having destroyed the Southern Capital of Nara, returned to the Northern Capital of Heian, only Prime Minister Kiyomori, his anger now appeased, delighted in the outcome. But the empress, Retired Emperor GoShirakawa, Retired Emperor Takakura, Regent Motomichi, and the others below them in station all deplored what had happened, declaring, "It was one thing to punish the evil monks, but what need was there to destroy the temples?"

The heads of the monks killed in battle were originally intended to be paraded through the main streets of the capital and then hung on the tree in front of the prison, but those in charge were so shocked at the destruction of Tōdai-ji and Kōfuku-ji that these orders were never issued. Instead, the heads were simply discarded here and there in the moats and drainage ditches.

In a document written in his own hand, Emperor Shōmu had declared, "When these temples prosper, the entire realm shall prosper. When these temples fall to ruin, the realm, too, shall fall into ruin." It thus appeared that without doubt these events must presage the downfall and ruin of the nation.

Thus this terrible year [1180] came to an end, and the fifth year of the Jishō era began.

Book Six

GoShirakawa: retired emperor and head of the imperial clan.
Kiyomori (Taira): lay priest, prime minister, and retired Taira clan head.
Munemori (Taira): son of Kiyomori and Taira clan head.
Nun of the Second Rank (Taira): wife of Kiyomori.
Yoritomo (Minamoto): leader of the anti-Taira forces in the east.
Yoshinaka (Minamoto): cousin of Yoritomo and leader of the anti-Taira forces in the north; also called Lord Kiso.

The New Year's ceremonies are shortened and do not have their normal luster owing to the burning of Nara. The gloom is deepened by the death of Retired Emperor Takakura. Yoshinaka of Kiso, working to overthrow the Taira, begins to gather allies in the north. The Taira's rule continues to weaken, and rebellions break out in Kyushu, Shikoku, and elsewhere.

THE DEATH OF KIYOMORI (6:7)

After this, all the warriors of the island of Shikoku went over to the side of Kōno no Michinobu. Reports also came that Tanzō, the superintendent of the Kumano Shrine, had shifted his sympathies to the Genji side, despite the many kindnesses shown him by the Heike. All the provinces in the north and the east

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Since further action could not be postponed, on the seventh day of the same month Kiyomori's remains were cremated at Otagi in the capital.[321] The Buddhist priest Enjitsu placed the ashes in a bag hung around his neck and journeyed with them down to the province of Settsu, where he deposited them in a grave on Sutra Island.

Kiyomori's name had been known throughout the land of Japan, and his might had set men trembling. But in the end his body was no more than a puff of smoke ascending in the sky above the capital, and his remains, after tarrying a little while, in time mingled with the sands of the shore where they were buried, dwindling at last into empty dust.

The Taira are able to beat back a Minamoto advance but cannot press the attack into the Minamoto strongholds in the east. Several obvious signs—the death of the leader of a Taira campaign, the deaths of priests praying for Taira victory and prosperity—foreshadow defeat for the Taira. Nevertheless, Munemori, the leader of the Taira clan and commander in chief of their armies, spends his time solidifying his position in the court bureaucracy.

Book Seven

MUNEMORI (Taira): son of Kiyomori and Taira clan head.
SANEMORI (Taira): elderly warrior.
TADANORI (Taira): brother of Kiyomori.
YOSHINAKA (Minamoto): cousin of Yoritomo and leader of the anti-Taira forces in the north; also called Lord Kiso.

The Taira summon warriors from all the provinces, but those who gather are mainly from the west. This army goes north to attack Yoshinaka and his troops. Yoshinaka traps and crushes the Taira army at both Kurikara Valley and Shinohara. Sanemori, an elderly Taira vassal, had pledged to die fighting during the battle at Shinohara.

SANEMORI (7:8)

Although all his fellow warriors on the Taira side had fled, Sanemori of the province of Musashi, one lone horseman, kept turning back again and again to engage the enemy and block their advance.

Purposely hoping to pass as a young man, he put on armor laced with greenish yellow leather over a battle robe of red brocade. He wore a horned helmet and carried a sword with gilt fittings, arrows fledged with black and white eagle feathers, and a rattan-wrapped bow. He was seated in a gold-rimmed saddle astride a gray horse with white markings.

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321. Otagi is a famous crematorium and cemetery in the eastern part of Kyoto.

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Tezuka Mitsumori, one of the warriors under Lord Kiso, spotted Sanemori and, thinking he would make a worthy opponent, called out to him, "What valiant man is that who goes there? I admire you for fighting on alone when all your comrades have fled. Tell me your name!"

"And who may you be?" asked Sanemori in return.

"Tezuka Mitsumori of the province of Shinano!" came the reply.

"Then we are well matched," Sanemori answered. "With all due respect to you, however, I have reasons for not wanting to reveal my name. Come on now, Tezuka. Let's see what you can do!"

As the two men prepared to lock in combat, one of Tezuka's retainers, rushing up from behind in order to protect his lord from attack, threw himself at Sanemori.

"Ho there, little fellow! Would you presume to grapple with the bravest man in all Japan?" said Sanemori. Dragging the retainer to his side, he pressed the man's head against the pommel of his saddle, cut it off, and tossed it aside.

His retainer cut down before his eyes, Tezuka wheeled around to Sanemori's left side and, lifting up the lower fringe of his armor, struck him two blows with his short sword. As Sanemori faltered under the impact, Tezuka seized him and dragged him from his horse.

Still fierce enough in spirit, Sanemori was by this time exhausted from the battle, and moreover, he was an old man. Thus Tezuka was able to overpower him. When another of Tezuka's retainers arrived late on the scene, Tezuka ordered him to cut off Sanemori's head, and then he galloped off to show it to Lord Kiso.

"I have met up with a very strange adversary!" said Tezuka. "I took him for an ordinary samurai, but he was wearing a brocade battle robe. He might be a commanding general, I thought, but he had no troops. I asked him repeatedly to reveal his name, but he refused to do so. He spoke with an eastern accent."

"Aha," said Lord Kiso. "This must be Sanemori of Musashi. I met him once when I was visiting Kōzuke Province. I was only a boy then, and he already had flecks of gray in his hair. By now he should be completely white headed. But this man's beard and sidelocks are black—something strange is going on. Higuchi Jirō is well acquainted with Sanemori; send for Higuchi!"

The moment that Higuchi Jirō laid eyes on the head, he said, "Ah, how pitiful! Yes, this is Sanemori."

"If so," said Lord Kiso, "then he must be at least seventy by now. He should be completely white haired. Why are his beard and sidelocks still black?"

The tears streaming down his face, Higuchi replied, "You're right. I should have explained about that, but I was so touched by the sight that before I knew it these tears overcame me. Even on less than momentous occasions, a man of arms should be able to say something worth remembering. And Sanemori could do that, because I recall how he always used to tell me, 'If you're over sixty when you go into battle, you should dye your beard and sidelocks black so you'll

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TADANORI (Taira): brother of Kiyomori, warrior, and avid poet.
YOSHINAKA (Minamoto): commander who defeats the Taira but is later attacked by Yoritomo; also called Lord Kiso.
YOSHITSUNE (Minamoto): half brother of Yoritomo; sent to the capital to destroy Yoshinaka.

Yoshitsune's punitive army arrives just as Yoshinaka's forces are at their weakest. Yoshinaka tries to set up defensive positions at Seta and Uji, outside the capital, but Yoshitsune is able to enter the capital and rescue Emperor GoShirakawa. Yoshinaka, who had earlier entered the capital with fifty thousand warriors, is forced to flee on horseback with six other riders.

THE DEATH OF LORD KISO (9:4)

Lord Kiso had brought with him from Shinano two women attendants, Tomoe and Yamabuki. Yamabuki had remained in the capital because of illness. Of these two, Tomoe, fair complexioned and with long hair, was of exceptional beauty. As a fighter she was a match for a thousand ordinary men, skilled in arms, able to bend the stoutest bow, on horseback or on foot, ever ready with her sword to confront any devil or god that came her way. She could manage the most unruly horse and gallop down the steepest slopes. Lord Kiso sent her into battle clad in finely meshed armor and equipped with a sword of unusual size and a powerful bow, depending on her to perform as one of his leading commanders. Again and again she emerged unrivaled in feats of valor. And this time too, even though so many of Lord Kiso's other riders had fled from his side or been struck down, Tomoe was among the six who remained with him.

Certain reports claimed that Yoshinaka was heading toward Tanba by way of Long Slope; others, that he had crossed over Ryūge Pass and was proceeding to the northern provinces. In fact he was fleeing west toward Seta, anxious to discover where Imai Kanehira and his men were. Meanwhile, Imai had been defending his position at Seta with the eight hundred or more men under him. But when his forces had been reduced by fighting to a mere fifty riders, he furled his banners and started back toward the capital, thinking that his superior in command, Yoshinaka, must be wondering about him. In Ōtsu, at a place on the Lake Biwa shore called Uchide, he met up with Lord Kiso as the latter was headed west.

While still some distance apart, Lord Kiso and Imai recognized each other and spurred their horses forward in anticipation of the meeting. Seizing Imai's hand, Lord Kiso exclaimed, "I had intended to die in the fighting in the riverbed at Rokujō, but I wanted so much to find out what had become of you. That's why I dodged my way through all those enemy troops and slipped off so I could come here!"

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THE ATTACK FROM THE CLIFF (9:12)

After this, the other Genji warriors charged into the fray, the Chichibu, the Ashikaga, the Miura, the Kamakura, and the Inomata, Kodama, Noiyo, Yokoyama, Nishitō, Tsuzukitō, and Shinotō leagues, until all the Genji and Heike forces had closed in combat. The two sides repeatedly dashed into each other's ranks, calling out their names back and forth, shouting and clamoring until the hills resounded with their cries, the din of their charging horses echoing like thunder. The arrows whizzing back and forth resembled nothing so much as torrents of rain. Some warriors, a wounded comrade on their backs, struggled to make their way toward the rear; others, despite being wounded, continued to fight while the mortally wounded fell dead where they were. Men rode side by side, grappling together and slashing at each other until one delivered a fatal stab to the other. Some held their foe down while they cut off his head; others, pinned down, had their heads lopped off in a like manner. Neither side revealed any weakness that its attackers could turn to advantage, and the Genji forces through their frontal attack alone did not seem to be able to gain victory.

Meanwhile, Yoshitsune had circled around to the rear and by dawn of the seventh day had climbed up to the region of Hiyodori Pass, preparing to swoop down on the Heike position at Ichi-no-tani. Just then, two stags and a doe, perhaps startled by the Genji horsemen, fled downhill in the direction of the Heike stronghold at Ichi-no-tani.

Catching sight of them, the Heike soldiers in the fort below exclaimed excitedly, "All the deer around here must have been so frightened of us that they fled far off into the mountains. That these deer would deliberately come toward a large force like ours seems highly peculiar! It must mean that the Genji are getting ready to charge down on us from above!"

Takechi Kiyonori, a man from Iyo Province, came forward. "Whatever it means," he said, "if they come from the direction of the enemy, we shouldn't let them by!" and he proceeded to fell the two stags with his bow and arrows, though he let the doe get away.

"What's the good of your shooting at deer!" objected Moritoshi of Etchū. "With just one of those arrows, you could have held off ten of the enemy. Killing is a sin to begin with, and then you waste arrows!" he grumbled.

Yoshitsune looked down over the Heike stronghold in the distance. "Try sending some of the horses down," he ordered. A few of the saddled horses were accordingly sent galloping down the slope. Some broke their legs and fell along the way, but others managed to reach the bottom without mishap. Three of them pulled up near the roof of Moritoshi's encampment and stood there trembling with fright.

Observing this, Yoshitsune announced, "If the riders are careful enough, the horses can get down without injury. Look lively, now—I'll show you how it's

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done!" Leading a force of thirty horsemen, he plummeted down the slope. The rest of the force followed, the incline so steep that the stirrups of the men in the rear clattered against the armor and helmets of those ahead of them. The ground was sandy, with scatterings of small rocks and stones, so that the riders fairly slid down for a distance of some seven hundred feet until they reached a shelflike stretch that halted their fall.

Peering down below, they could see only huge moss-shrouded rocks, a sheer drop of some hundred and forty or fifty feet. No way to go back where they had come from, no way to go forward that they could see, the men were utterly baffled, exclaiming, "This is the end!"

Just then, Sawara Yoshitsura came forward. "In Miura where I come from, we think nothing of galloping day and night over places like this just to get at a bird on the wing. This is a Miura-style racecourse!" he declared and led the way by plunging down the slope. The rest of the men followed. "Ei! Ei!" they cried in muffled voices, encouraging their horses on, the descent so terrifying that they kept their eyes closed as they went down. It seemed a feat impossible for mere human beings to accomplish, instead a performance by devils or spirits.

Halfway down, they began calling out their battle cries, and as the voices of the three thousand horsemen came echoing back from the surrounding hills, they sounded like the shouts of one hundred thousand.

The men under Murakami Yasukuni began setting fires and before long had burned down all the Heike barracks and makeshift buildings. By chance, a strong wind was blowing and black smoke billowed through the air, throwing the Heike soldiers into such panic that they scrambled toward the beaches fronting the encampment, certain that in that direction lay their only hope for escape.

A number of boats were drawn up in readiness along the shore, but the fleeing troops were in such haste to board them that at times four or five hundred or even a thousand men, all fully armed, struggled to get into a single boat, impossible as that was. After advancing no more than three hundred and fifty yards from shore, three large vessels sank before the eyes of the onlookers.

Thereafter, the order went out: "Persons of rank are to be allowed aboard, underlings are not!" and swords and halberds were used to enforce it. But even after the order became known, men continued to cling to the boats that refused to take them, trying to climb aboard. As a result, a hand was cut off here, an arm severed at the elbow there, until the waters along the Ichi-no-tani shore turned crimson and the bodies floated side by side.

The Heike warrior Noritsune, the governor of Noto, had fought many battles and had never once been defeated, but what must have been his thoughts now? Mounted on his steed Usuguro, Gray Black, he fled westward. At the Akashi shore in Harima he boarded a boat and made his way across the straits to Yashima in Sanuki.

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THE DEATH OF TADANORI (9:14)

Taira no Tadanori, the governor of Satsuma, served as commanding general of the western flank at the battle of Ichi-no-tani. Dressed in a battle robe of dark blue brocade and armor laced with black silk, he rode a sturdy black horse fitted with a lacquer saddle flecked with gold. Surrounded by some hundred horsemen under his command, he was retiring from the engagement in a calm and unhurried manner, halting his horse now and then to parry with one of the enemy.

Okabe no Rokuyata, a member of the Inomata group of Genji warriors, spotted Tadanori and galloped after him in pursuit, urging his horse forward with spurs and whip and shouting, "Who goes there? Declare your name!"

"I'm a friend!" replied Tadanori, but as he turned to speak, he revealed enough of his face to make it apparent that his teeth were blackened.

"Ha!" thought Rokuyata. "No one on our side looks like that! This must be one of the Taira lords." Overtaking Tadanori, he began to grapple with him. On seeing this, the hundred horsemen under Tadanori, fighting men recruited from other provinces, fled as fast as they could, not one of them coming to his aid.

"Wretch!" exclaimed Tadanori. "You should have believed me when I said I was a friend!" Brought up in Kumano, a powerful man trained to act with lightning speed, Tadanori drew his sword and struck three blows at Rokuyata, two while the latter was still seated in the saddle and a third after he had unhorsed him. The first two glanced off Rokuyata's armor and did no harm. The third pierced his face, though not with sufficient force to kill him.

Tadanori pinned his attacker to the ground and was about to cut off his head when Rokuyata's page, rushing up from behind, drew his long sword and with one blow cut off Tadanori's arm at the elbow.

Tadanori realized this was the end. "Give me time enough for ten invocations of the Buddha!" he said. Gripping Rokuyata, he flung him a bow's length to the side. Then he faced west and, in a loud voice, recited these words: "His bright light illumines the worlds in the ten directions. Without fail He gathers up all living beings who recite His name!" He had scarcely concluded his recitation when Rokuyata approached from behind and struck off his head.

Rokuyata felt that the man had died like a true commanding general, but he still did not know his name. He found a slip of paper fastened to Tadanori's quiver, however, on which was written a poem entitled "On a Journey, Lodging Beneath the Blossoms." It read:

> Evening drawing on, I'll take lodging in the shade of this tree,
> and make its blossoms my host for the night.

The poem was signed "Tadanori."

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The Genji riders pressing closer, his horse weakened, and Shigehira rode into the sea, but by chance the water was so shallow at that spot that he realized it would be impossible to drown himself. Dismounting, he cut the straps of his armor, undid his shoulder cord and, slipping out of his helmet and other fittings, prepared to cut open his stomach.

Shō no Takaie, who was riding ahead of Kajiwara, spurred his mount forward with whip and stirrups and, leaping from the horse's back with all possible speed, shouted, "Don't try anything like that! From now on I'll be right beside you wherever you go!" Then he hoisted Shigehira onto his own horse and tied him tightly to the pommel of the saddle, while he himself mounted another horse and led Shigehira off in the direction of the Genji encampment.

Meanwhile, Morinaga, mounted on a superb horse noted for its stamina, was able to make a rapid getaway. Later, he took refuge with a Buddhist priest of Kumano known as the Hokkyō (Dharma Bridge) of Onaka. But after the priest's death, his widow, a nun, journeyed to the capital in connection with a lawsuit, and at that time Morinaga accompanied her. Because he was Shigehira's foster brother, people of both high and low station in the capital recognized him. "How shameless, that Morinaga!" they said, wagging their fingers in reproval. "After all the kindness he received, to refuse to die with his lord! And now, to add to the outrage, he comes here in the company of a nun!"

Even Morinaga, they say, could not help feeling a sense of shame, and he kept his face hidden behind a fan.

THE DEATH OF ATSUMORI (9:16)

The Heike had lost the battle. "Those Taira lords will be heading for the shore in hopes of making their getaway by boat!" thought Kumagae Naozane to himself. "Fine! I'll go look for one of their generals to grapple with!" and he turned his horse in the direction of the beach.

As he did so, he spotted a lone warrior riding into the sea, making for the boats in the offing. He was wearing a battle robe of finely woven silk embroidered in a crane design, armor of light green lacing, and a horned helmet. He carried a sword with gilt fittings and a quiver whose arrows were fledged with black and white eagle feathers and held a rattan-wound bow in his hand. He was seated in a gold-rimmed saddle, astride a gray horse with white markings.

The lone warrior's horse had swum out about two hundred feet from the shore when Kumagae, waving with his fan, called out, "Ho there, General! I see you. Don't shame yourself by showing your back to an enemy. Come back!"

The rider, acknowledging the call, turned toward the beach. As he was about to ride up out of the waves, Kumagae drew alongside and grappled with him, dragging him from his horse. Pinning him down so as to cut off his head,

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Buddhist monk grew even stronger. The flute in question had been presented by Retired Emperor Toba to Atsumori's grandfather, Tadamori, who was a skilled player. From him it had been passed down to the son, Tsunemori, and in turn had been given to Atsumori because of his marked aptitude for the instrument. It was known by the name Saeda, Little Branch.

It is moving to think that for all their exaggerated phrases and flowery embellishments, even music and the arts can in the end lead a man to praise the Buddha's way.

After a resounding defeat, the Taira forces scatter in their attempt to flee by sea.

Book Eleven

ANTOKU: emperor and son of Emperor Takakura and Kenreimon'in.

GOSHIRAKAWA: retired emperor and head of the imperial clan.

KAGETOKI (Kajiwara): deputy commander of Minamoto forces and rival of Yoshitsune.

KENREIMON'IN (Taira): daughter of Kiyomori and Nun of the Second Rank.

MORITSUGI (Taira): warrior serving Munemori.

MUNEMORI (Taira): son of Kiyomori, Taira clan head, and leader of the Taira forces at Yashima.

NORITSUNE (Taira): nephew of Kiyomori and leading Taira commander.

NUN OF THE SECOND RANK (Taira): widow of Kiyomori and grandmother of Emperor Antoku.

YOSHIMORI (Minamoto): warrior serving Yoshitsune.

YOSHITSUNE (Minamoto): younger half brother of Yoritomo and leader of the Genji forces at Yashima and Dan-no-ura.

After landing with a small force on the island of Shikoku, Yoshitsune leads his Genji troops to the rear of the Taira camp at Yashima, where the Taira have set up their headquarters. With a small force, he manages to bluff the Taira, led by Munemori, into retreating to their boats.

THE DEATH OF TSUGINOBU (11:3)

That day Yoshitsune wore a red brocade battle robe and a suit of armor shaded deep purple at the lower edge. He carried a sword with gilt-bronze fittings and arrows decorated with black and white feathers. Gripping the middle of his rattan-wrapped bow, he glared at the enemy boats and in a loud voice called out his name: "Minamoto no Yoshitsune, envoy of the retired emperor, fifth-rank lieutenant of the imperial police!" He was followed by Nobutsuna of Izu,

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"Why would we have to beg?" replied Moritsugi. "Thanks to our lord's largesse, we had all we needed and more! But I'm told that you've been robbing people holed up around Mount Suzuka in Ise to get by and feed your families, living the life of bandits so you can feed yourselves and your wives and children!"

At this Ietada spoke up from the Genji side: "Enough of this useless slander, gentlemen! Hurling groundless insults back and forth will never decide the matter. But last spring at Ichi-no-tani I believe you saw what our men, the young lords of Musashi and Sagami, could do in battle, did you not?"

Before he had finished speaking, his younger brother Chikanori, who was at his side, selected an arrow of unusual length and, fitting it in place, drew his bow far back and let it fly. The arrow struck Moritsugi in the chest, passing all the way through the breastplate of his armor, and this put an end to the battle of words.

"Battling from a boat has its own requirements," declared Noritsune. He had not put on a long battle robe but was wearing only a short-sleeved jacket with a rolled Chinese design and a suit of finely laced armor. At his waist he wore an enormous sword; on his back was a quiver holding twenty-four arrows fledged with black hawk feathers; and he grasped a rattan-bound bow. Once he had been the strongest bowman and the fiercest fighter in the capital, and no one could come within range of his arrows without being felled. And today he had determined to shoot down none other than Yoshitsune himself.

But the Genji warriors anticipated his intentions. Tsuginobu, his younger brother Tadanobu, Yoshimori, Hirotsuna, Genzō, Kumai Tarō, Musashibō Benkei, and the others, each a match for a thousand ordinary warriors, pressed forward on their horses, jostling with one another for first place and forming a barrier to meet Noritsune's arrows.

"You worthless fellows, get out of the way of my arrows!" Noritsune shouted helplessly. Again and again he fitted arrows to his bow and sent them flying, and in an instant ten or more armored warriors were felled. Among them was Tsuginobu of Ōshū, who was pierced by an arrow that entered his left shoulder and came out on his right side, and he tumbled headlong from his horse.

A young boy in Noritsune's service named Kikuō was famous for his strength and daring. Wearing a greenish yellow stomach guard and a three-plate helmet, he drew from its sheath a wooden-handle halberd and rushed forward in hopes of cutting off Tsuginobu's head. But Tsuginobu's brother Tadanobu, determined to thwart him, drew his bow all the way back and aimed an arrow. It struck the back joint of the boy's stomach guard and shot through him, sending him sprawling on all fours.

Observing what had happened, Noritsune leaped from his boat and, grasping his bow in his left hand, used his right to seize Kikuō and drag him into the boat. Thus he prevented the Genji men from taking the boy's head, although the boy died of his wound. He had originally been a page in the household of

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Noritsune's older brother Michimori, but after the latter's death, he had been taken into Noritsune's service. He was only eighteen at the time of his death. Noritsune was so grief stricken at what had happened that he took no further part in the day's battle.

Meanwhile Yoshitsune, giving orders for the stricken Tsuginobu to be carried to the rear, got off his horse and, taking Tsuginobu's hand, asked, "How are you feeling?"

Speaking in a faint and breathless voice, Tsuginobu replied, "This is the end for me."

"Is there anything more you want to say?" asked Yoshitsune.

"I have nothing more to say," was the reply. "I'm sorry only that I must die before I have seen my lord gain his rightful place in the world, that's all. Any man who takes up bow and arrow knows that one day he may die by the arrows of his enemy. But in future ages, when they talk about these wars between the Genji and the Heike, if they say that Tsuginobu of Ōshū fell on the beach at Yashima in Sanuki, giving up his life to save that of his lord, then that is all a warrior could hope for by way of recognition in this life and remembrance in the life hereafter." As he spoke, his voice grew fainter and fainter.

Speaking through his tears, Yoshitsune asked whether any worthy monks were nearby. When one was found, Yoshitsune told him, "This man is now dying of his wounds. See that you spend the day copying out sutra texts for the repose of his soul." Then he took a sturdy, well-fed black horse fitted with a gold-bordered saddle and gave it as payment to the monk. The horse was known as Lord Black of the fifth rank and had been given to Yoshitsune when he was promoted to the post of fifth-rank lieutenant. Yoshitsune had ridden this very horse when he crossed over Hiyodori Pass to attack Ichi-no-tani.

Tsuginobu's brother Tadanobu and the other warriors all looked on in tears, exclaiming, "For a lord like this, a man could give up his life without having the smallest particle of regret!"

NASU NO YOICHI (11:4)

In the provinces of Awa and Sanuki those persons who had stopped siding with the Heike and were awaiting only the arrival of the Genji now began to appear, fourteen or fifteen horsemen here, twenty horsemen there, coming down from the mountains or emerging from caves where they had been hiding, until Yoshitsune in no time found himself with a force of more than three hundred mounted men.

"The day is too far gone," he announced. "There's no hope of a decisive victory today!" He had just begun withdrawing his men when a small boat, beautifully decorated, appeared in the offing, rowing in the direction of the shore. When it had come within a couple of hundred feet of the shore, it turned sideways.

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A beautiful woman (*right*) in a Heike boat raises a fan as a challenge to the Genji archers. Under orders from Yoshitsune, Nasu no Yoichi (*left*) hits the target with his arrow. (A 1656 Meireki woodblock edition, by permission of Shogakukan)

Because the target was too far to be within range, Yoichi advanced some forty feet into the water, but he could see that the fan was still more than two hundred and fifty feet away. It was the eighteenth day of the Second Month of the lunar calendar, around six o'clock in the late afternoon, and a strong north wind was blowing, sending high waves surging up on the beach. The boat was wobbling up and down on the waves, and the fan, not firmly fastened, flapped back and forth. Out in the sea the Heike watched from their boats strung out over the water while the Genji, their horses lined up side by side, looked on from the shore.

Yoichi closed his eyes. "Hail to Bodhisattva Hachiman and to the gods of my homeland of Shimotsuke, the Buddha in his manifestation at Nikkō, and the gods of Utsunomiya and the Yuzen Shrine in Nasu. Help me hit the fan in the center, I pray you. If I fail in this attempt, I will break my bow and end my life, never to show my face before anyone again. If you would have me return once more to my native land, may my arrow not miss the mark!" Such was the prayer he offered up in his heart.

When he opened his eyes again, he found that the wind had died down a little and the fan had become a somewhat less difficult target. Yoichi took out the humming arrow, fitted it to his bow and, pulling the bow all the way back, sent it whistling on its way.

Yoichi was small in stature, and the arrow measured only three fingers more than the usual ten handbreadths and three fingers in length, but the bow was powerful and the arrow made a long droning noise that resounded all across

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the water. Then with a crack it struck the fan about an inch above the rivet, knocking it loose. As the arrow plunged beneath the waves, the fan rose up into the sky. For a moment it fluttered about in the empty air, buffeted this way and that by the spring breeze, and then all at once it plummeted into the sea. In the rays of the setting sun, the red fan face with its golden sun could be seen bobbing and sinking as it drifted over the white waves.[330]

Offshore the Heike drummed on the gunwales of their boats to signal their admiration, while on the beach the Genji shouted and pounded on their quivers.

THE LOST BOW (11:5)

Perhaps he was carried away with the excitement of the moment: in one of the Heike boats a man of about fifty, wearing armor laced with black leather and carrying a wooden-handle halberd, stood up in a spot near where the fan had been displayed and began to do a dance. Yoshimori of Ise, having advanced on his horse to a position right behind Yoichi, said, "The commander has ordered you to shoot down that man!"

This time Yoichi took one of the plain arrows from his quiver and, fitting it into place, drew the bow back fully. With a thud the arrow struck the man's collarbone and sent him tumbling headfirst into the bottom of the boat. The Heike side looked on in silence while among the Genji, some once more rattled their quivers and shouted, "Good shot!" but others exclaimed, "Heartless!"

This was more than the Heike could endure. Three of their warriors, one bearing a shield, a second with a bow, and a third with a halberd, made their way to the beach and, planting the shield there, beckoned to the enemy and shouted, "Attack us if you can!"

"Some of you young fellows on good horses—attack them and kick them out of the way!" ordered Yoshitsune.

Five horsemen—Shirō, Tōōjichi, and Jūrō of Mionoya in Musashi, Shirō of Kōzuke, and Chūji of Shinano—let out a yell and charged forward in a group. From behind the shield the Heike shot a large arrow with a black lacquer shaft and black feathers. Jūrō was riding at the head of the group, and the arrow struck his horse in the left side near the chest rope, burying the tip of the arrow in the horse's flesh. The horse fell over like a toppled screen.

Jūrō of Mionoya, throwing his right leg over the horse's back, leaped down from the left side and immediately drew his sword. One of the Heike men emerged from behind the shield, waving a halberd in a threatening fashion, whereupon Jūrō, judging that with his small sword he could hardly stand up against such an opponent, began to scramble to safety. The man with the halberd was after him at once, but just when it seemed as though he would cut

330. Red was associated with the Heike and white with the Genji.

Bahan dengan hak cipta

Jūrō down with the halberd, he suddenly thrust the weapon under his left arm and with his right hand snatched at the neck guard of Jūrō's helmet. He could not quite reach it, but after making three unsuccessful tries, he finally, on the fourth, succeeded in grasping the neck guard. For a time the neck guard held fast, but at last Jūrō managed to wrest himself free, snapping off the neck guard at the top plate, and made his escape. The other four riders in his group, reluctant to risk having their horses shot at, looked on from a distance.

Having taken shelter among his companions' horses, Jūrō breathed a sigh of relief. His attacker did not attempt to pursue him but, leaning on his halberd and brandishing aloft the neck guard he had snatched from Jūrō's helmet, shouted in a loud voice, "You've no doubt heard of me for some time now, and today you see me in person! I'm the one the young fellows of the capital call Akushichibyōe[331] Kagekiyo of Kazusa!" Having thus proclaimed his identity, he left the field.

Somewhat subdued by all this, the Heike decided not to try to attack Kagekiyo but instead ordered some two hundred or so of their men to go to the beach, where they arranged their shields so that they overlapped like a hen's wings and gestured to the Genji forces, shouting, "Come on and get us!"

"How dare they!" said Yoshitsune when he saw them, and he ordered Sanemoto and his son Motokiyo and the Kaneko brothers to act as a vanguard, Tadanobu and Yoshimori of Ōshū to take up positions to the left and right, and Tashiro no Kanja to cover the rear, sending more than eighty mounted men yelling and galloping to meet the challenge.

The Heike, most of whom were not mounted but were on foot, decided they would be no match for men on horseback and retreated, returning to their boats. The shields they had planted on the beach soon were scattered to left and right like so many tally slips.

Encouraged by this success, the Genji warriors pressed their attack, riding into the sea until the water came up to the bellies of their horses. Yoshitsune, too, fought his way deep into the water when one of the Heike boats, using rakes, two or three times managed to catch hold of his neck guard. Yoshitsune's men used their swords and halberds to free the neck guard from entanglement. While this was happening, however, Yoshitsune's bow somehow became snagged by the rakes and was dragged away from him.

Bending down from his horse, Yoshitsune tried again and again to use his whip to regain possession of the bow. "Let it go!" his men urged him, but he persisted until he finally recovered the bow and then, laughing, returned to the others.

His seasoned warriors, wagging their fingers in disapproval, said, "Why are you so reluctant to lose a mere bow? Even if it cost a hundred or a thousand strings of coins, how could it be worth risking your life for?"

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331. In names, the prefix "Aku-" often has the meaning of "fierce."

Bahan dengan hak cipta

"It's not that I mind about the cost of the bow," replied Yoshitsune. "If this bow of mine had been the kind that was so stout that it took two or three men to string it—the kind my uncle Tametomo used—then I would deliberately let them snatch it just so they could say, 'Ah, so this is Yoshitsune's bow!' But this one was puny—just think if it had fallen into the hands of my enemies and they had said, 'Just look—this is the kind of bow used by the great Genji Commander in Chief Yoshitsune!' I couldn't bear the thought of their scornful laughter! That's why I risked my life to get it back." His men all were deeply impressed with this answer.

The sun having set by this time, the Genji forces withdrew and made their camp in the fields and hills between Mure and Takamatsu. They had not slept for three whole days. The first day they had set out by boat from Watanabe and Fukushima, and that night they had been so tossed about by the giant waves that they could get no sleep at all. Yesterday they had battled the enemy at Katsuura in the province of Awa and had spent all night crossing the mountains. Today again they had fought the whole day, and all of them were utterly exhausted. Some used their helmets for pillows; others used their quivers or the sleeves of their armor as pillows, falling at once into a deep and heedless sleep. Only Yoshitsune and Yoshimori of Ise remained awake.

Yoshitsune climbed up to a high point in order to look around and watch for an enemy approach and to try to determine what possible route the enemy might use to attack. Yoshimori took up a waiting position in a hollow so he could shoot the horses in the belly if the enemy attacked from that direction.

The Heike appointed Noritsune, the governor of Noto, to command a force of some five hundred horsemen and to prepare to launch a night attack. But because Moritsugi of Etchū and Emi no Jirō Morikata could not agree on which of them would spearhead the attack, the night passed without an attack. What could the Genji have possibly done if a night attack had been launched?[332] But the fact that no such attack was so much as attempted shows how low the fortunes of the Heike had sunk.

THE COCKFIGHTS AND THE BATTLE OF DAN-NO-URA (11:7)

Thus Yoshitsune advanced as far as the Suō region, where he joined forces with his older brother Noriyori, the governor of Mikawa. Meanwhile the Heike had arrived at Hikushima in the province of Nagato. Having landed at Katsuura, or Victory Beach, in Awa, the Genji had conquered their foes at Yashima. When word got out that the Heike had reached Hikushima, or Retreat Island, while the Genji were ensconced at a place called Oitsu, or Pursuit Crossing, in the same province, people wondered at the coincidence.

Tanzō, the superintendent of the Kumano Shrine, unable to decide whether to support the Heike or the Genji side, conducted a ceremony at the New

332. A variant has "How could the Genji have withstood the attack?"

Bahan dengan hak cipta

Then Moritsugi of Etchū spoke up. "If you're grabbing, then make a grab for the commander in chief, Yoshitsune! They say Yoshitsune's easy to spot because he's short and fair skinned, and his teeth stick out. But they also say that because he keeps changing his battle robe and armor, you might not recognize him right away."

"He may be brave at heart, but what can a skinny little fellow like that do?" said Akushichibyōe. "I'll just tuck him under one arm and fling him into the ocean!"

After issuing the orders just described, the new middle counselor, Tomomori, went to speak to his brother Munemori. "Our fighting men seem to be in excellent spirits today. But I'm afraid that Shigeyoshi of Awa in Shikoku is not fully committed to our cause. Perhaps we should have him beheaded."

"How could we behead him when we have no evidence of his disloyalty? He has been perfectly trustworthy in his service. Have someone call him here!"

In response to this command, Shigeyoshi appeared, wearing an orange battle robe and armor with white leather lacing, and made his obeisance before Munemori.

"How are you feeling, Shigeyoshi? Have you had a change of heart?" said Munemori. "You seem dispirited today. I trust you've ordered your men from Shikoku to do their best in battle. Don't lose your nerve!"

"Why would I lose my nerve!" exclaimed Shigeyoshi, as he stood up to leave. "How I'd like to lop this fellow's head off!" thought Tomomori as Shigeyoshi withdrew, and he gripped the handle of his sword hard enough to break it in two, looking fixedly at Munemori. But because the latter refused to give any sign of agreement, Tomomori was powerless to move.

The Heike arranged their thousand or more boats into three groups. Rowing in the vanguard were some five hundred boats under the command of Hidetō of Yamaga in Kyushu. Next came the second group, around three hundred boats of the Matsura clans. The Heike commanders followed in a third group made up of about two hundred boats.

Hidetō was the finest archer in all Kyushu, and he had selected a force of five hundred men who, though hardly his equal in skill, still qualified as expert marksmen. He ordered them to line up shoulder to shoulder in the bow and stern of each of the boats and to shoot their five hundred arrows all at the same time.

The Genji had more than three thousand boats, which meant that they were considerably superior in number. But their arrows came winging from all directions so that it was difficult to determine just where their skilled archers were positioned. Yoshitsune was in the very forefront of the action, but the Genji were so pelted with arrows that they faltered, their shields and armor offering scarcely any protection at all. The Heike, certain that their side was winning, banged away at the drums that signaled the attack and shouted with glee.

Bahan dengan hak cipta

"What a blunder!" exclaimed the Heike leader Tomomori. "I should have cut off and thrown away Shigeyoshi's head!" Much as he might pour out his regrets, however, the situation was now past remedy.

So it was that all the fighting men of Shikoku and Kyushu turned against the Heike and threw in their lot with the Genji. Those who up to now had been models of obedience suddenly turned their bows on their own leaders or drew their swords to menace those who had been their commanders. When the Heike made for this or that shore, they found high waves impeding their approach; when they headed for this or that beach, they discovered the arrows of their enemies waiting for them. The long struggle between the Genji and the Heike for mastery of the realm was destined, it seemed, to end on this very day.

THE DROWNING OF THE FORMER EMPEROR (11:9)

By this time the Genji warriors had succeeded in boarding the Heike boats, shooting dead the sailors and helmsmen with their arrows or cutting them down with their swords. The bodies lay heaped in the bottom of the boats, and there was no longer anyone to keep the boats on course.

Taira no Tomomori boarded a small craft and made his way to the vessel in which the former emperor was riding. "This is what the world has come to!" he exclaimed. "Have all these unsightly things thrown into the sea!" Then he began racing from prow to stern, sweeping, mopping, dusting, and attempting with his own hands to put the boat into proper order.

"How goes the battle, Lord Tomomori?" asked the emperor's ladies-in-waiting, pressing him with questions.

"You'll have a chance to see some splendid gentlemen from the eastern region!" he replied with a cackling laugh.

"How can you joke at a time like this!" they protested, their voices joined in a chorus of shrieks and wails.

Observing the situation and evidently having been prepared for some time for such an eventuality, the Nun of the Second Rank, the emperor's grandmother, slipped a two-layer nun's robe over her head and tied her glossed silk trousers high at the waist. She placed the sacred jewel, one of the three imperial regalia, under her arm, thrust the sacred sword in her sash, and took the child emperor in her arms. "I may be a mere woman, but I have no intention of falling into the hands of the enemy! I will accompany my lord. All those of you who are resolved to fulfill your duty by doing likewise, quickly follow me!" So saying, she strode to the side of the boat.

The emperor had barely turned eight but had the bearing of someone much older than that. The beauty of his face and form seemed to radiate all around him. His shimmering black hair fell down the length of his back.

Startled and confused, he asked, "Grandma, where are you going to take me?"

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Gazing at his innocent face and struggling to hold back her tears, the nun replied, "Don't you understand? In your previous life you were careful to observe the ten good rules of conduct, and for that reason you were reborn in this life as a ruler of ten thousand chariots. But now evil entanglements have you in their power, and your days of good fortune have come to an end.

"First," she told him tearfully, "you must face east and bid farewell to the goddess of the Grand Shrine at Ise. Then you must turn west and trust in Amida Buddha to come with his hosts to greet you and lead you to his Pure Land. Come now, turn your face to the west and recite the invocation of the Buddha's name. This far-off land of ours is no bigger than a millet seed, a realm of sorrow and adversity. Let us leave it now and go together to a place of rejoicing, the paradise of the Pure Land!"

Dressed in a dove gray robe, his hair now done in boyish loops on either side of his head, the child, his face bathed in tears, pressed his small hands together, knelt down, and bowed first toward the east, taking his leave of the deity of the Ise Shrine. Then he turned toward the west and began chanting the *nenbutsu*, the invocation of Amida's name. The nun then took him in her arms. Comforting him, she said, "There's another capital down there beneath the waves!" So they plunged to the bottom of the thousand-fathom sea.

How pitiful that the spring winds of impermanence should so abruptly scatter the beauty of the blossoms; how heartless that the rough waves of reincarnation should engulf this tender body! Long Life is the name they give to the imperial palace, signaling that one should reside there for years unending; its gates are dubbed Ageless, a term that speaks of a reign forever young. Yet before he had reached the age of ten, this ruler ended as refuse on the ocean floor.

Ten past virtues rewarded with a throne, yet how fleeting was that prize! He who once was a dragon among the clouds now had become a fish in the depths of the sea. Dwelling once on terraces lofty as those of the god Brahma, in palaces like the Joyful Sight Citadel of the god Indra, surrounded by great lords and ministers of state, a throng of kin and clansmen in his following, now in an instant he ended his life beneath this boat, under these billows—sad, sad indeed!

Yoshitsune returns to the capital with the imperial regalia and the Heike prisoners. The praise and awards showered on him arouse the suspicions of Yoritomo, and the situation is exacerbated when Kajiwara Kagetoki slanders Yoshitsune. Meanwhile, Munemori and his son, as well as Shigehira and other leading members of the Taira family, are executed.

The Initiates' Book

GoShirakawa: retired emperor, head of the imperial clan, and paternal grandfather of Emperor Antoku.

Kenreimon'in (Taira): daughter of Kiyomori, consort of Emperor Takakura, and mother of the deceased emperor Antoku; taken prisoner at Dan-no-ura.

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THE IMPERIAL LADY BECOMES A NUN (1)

Kenreimon'in took up residence in the Yoshida area, at the foot of the eastern hills, in a small hermitage belonging to a Buddhist monk of Nara named Kyōe. No one had lived there for many years, and the hut had fallen into disrepair. The garden was buried in weeds, and wild ferns sprouted by the eaves. The blinds had rotted away, leaving the sleeping room exposed to view and offering little shelter from the wind or rain. Although blossoms of one kind and another opened in season, no occupant was present to admire them; and although the moonlight streamed in night after night, no one sat up until dawn delighting in it.

In earlier times, Kenreimon'in had rested on a jeweled dais, brocade hangings surrounding her, but now, parted from all those who had meant anything to her, she resided in this shabby, half-decayed retreat. One can only surmise how forlorn her thoughts must have been. She was like a fish stranded on land, a bird that has been torn from its nest. Such was her present life that she recalled with longing those earlier days when her home had been no more than a boat tossing on the waves. Her thoughts, journeying far away over blue-billowed waters, rested once again on the distant clouds of the western sea. In her reed-thatched hut deep in moss, she wept to see the moonlight fill her garden by the eastern hills. Truly, no words can convey her sadness.

On the first day of the Fifth Month in the first year of the Bunji era [1185], Imperial Lady Kenreimon'in took the tonsure and became a nun. The priest who administered the precepts to her was the Reverend Insei of Chōraku-ji. In return she made an offering to him of an informal robe that had belonged to her son, the late emperor Antoku. He had worn the robe until his final days, and it still retained the fragrance of his body. She had brought it all the way with her when she returned to the capital from the western region, regarding it as a last memento of her child, and had supposed that whatever might come, she would never part with it. But since she had nothing else to serve as a gift, she offered it with a profusion of tears, hopeful that at the same time it might help her son attain buddhahood.

The Reverend Insei could find no words with which to acknowledge the offering but, wetting the black sleeves of his clerical robe, made his way from the room in tears. It is said that he had the robe remade into a holy banner to hang in front of the Buddha of Chōraku-ji.

By imperial order when she was fifteen, Kenreimon'in had been appointed to serve in the palace, and when she was sixteen, she advanced to the position of imperial consort, attending at the emperor's side. At dawn she urged him to look to the official business of the court; when evening came she was his sole companion for the night. At the age of twenty-two she bore him a son, who was designated as the heir apparent, and when he ascended the throne she was honored with the palace appellation of Kenreimon'in.

Bahan dengan hak cipta

The tolling of the evening bell from a temple in the fields sounded its somber note, and dew from the grasses along the way made her sleeves, already damp with tears, wetter than ever. A stormy wind began to blow, tumbling the leaves from the trees; the sky clouded over; and autumn showers began to fall. She could just catch the faint sad belling of a deer, and the half-audible lamentations of the insects. Everything contrived to fill her with a sense of desolation difficult to describe in words. Even in those earlier days, when her life had been a precarious journey from one cove or one island to another, she reflected sadly, she had never had such a feeling of hopelessness.

The retreat was in a lonely spot of moss-covered crags, the sort of place, she felt, where she could live out her days. As she looked about her, she noted that the bush clover in the dew-filled garden had been stripped of its leaves by frost, that the chrysanthemums by the hedge, past their prime, were faded and dry—all reflecting, it seemed, her own condition. Making her way to where the statue of the Buddha was enshrined, she said a prayer: "May the spirit of the late emperor attain perfect enlightenment; may he quickly gain the wisdom of the buddhas!" But even as she did so, the image of her dead son seemed to appear before her, and she wondered in what future existence she might be able to forget him.

Next to the Jakkō-in she had a small building erected, ten feet square in size, with one room to sleep in and the other to house the image of the Buddha. Morning and evening, day and night, she performed her devotions in front of the image, ceaselessly intoning the Buddha's name over the long hours. In this way, always diligent, she passed the months and days.

On the fifteenth day of the Tenth Month, as evening was approaching, Kenreimon'in heard the sound of footsteps on the dried oak leaves that littered the garden. "Who could be coming to call at a place so far removed from the world as this?" she said, addressing her woman companion. "Go see who it is. If it is someone I should not see, I must hurry to take cover!" But when the woman went to look, she found that it was only a stag that had happened to pass by.

"Who was it?" asked Kenreimon'in, to which her companion, Lady Dainagon no Suke, struggling to hold back her tears, replied with this poem:

> Who would tread a path to this rocky lair?
> It was a deer whose passing rustled the leaves of the oak.

Struck by the pathos of the situation, Kenreimon'in carefully inscribed the poem on the small sliding panel by her window.

During her drab and uneventful life, bitter as it was, she found many things that provided food for thought. The trees ranged before the eaves of her retreat suggested to her the seven rows of jewel-laden trees that are said to grow in the Western Paradise, and the water pooled in a crevice in the rocks brought to mind the wonderful water of eight blessings to be found there. Spring blossoms,

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"Is anyone in? Is anyone in?" called the retired emperor, but no one responded. Finally, after some time, an elderly nun, bent with age, appeared.

"Where is the imperial lady?" asked the retired emperor.

"She has gone to the hilltop to pick flowers," was the answer.

"Doesn't she have someone who can do such things for her?" he asked. "This is too pitiable, even for someone who has renounced the world!"

"The good karmic effects resulting from her observance of the Five Precepts and the Ten Virtuous Acts in a previous existence have ended," the old nun explained, "and so she has been reduced to the state in which you see her. But when one has renounced the world to pursue religious practice, why recoil from such hardships? As the Sutra on Cause and Effect tells us, 'If you would know past causes, look to present effects; if you would know future effects, observe present causes.' When Your Majesty understands the relationship between cause and effect in the past and future, you will see that there is no occasion for lamentation. At the age of nineteen the crown prince Siddhartha left the city of Gaya and went to the foot of Mount Dadaloka. There, fashioning a garment of tree leaves to cover his nakedness, he climbed the peaks to gather firewood, descended into the valleys to draw water, and through the merit accruing from these difficult and painful practices he was able in the end to gain complete and perfect enlightenment."

Looking at the nun more closely, the retired emperor could see that she was dressed in a sort of patched robe in which bits of silk and plain cloth had been randomly sewn together. Wondering that such a speech should emanate from a person dressed like this, he asked, "Who are you?"

Breaking down in sobs, the nun was at first unable to reply. Finally, mastering her tears, she replied, "I cannot answer without feelings of great embarrassment! I am the daughter of the late lesser counselor and lay priest Fujiwara no Shinsei. I was known by the name Awa-no-naishi. My mother was the Kii Lady of the Second Rank. At one time you were kind enough to treat me with great favor. If now you no longer recognize me, then, old and decrepit as I am, what good would there be in trying to remind you . . . " She hid her face in her sleeve, helpless to control her emotions, a sight too pitiable to behold.

"Are you really Awa-no-naishi?" the retired emperor exclaimed, tears welling up in his eyes. "Indeed, I did not recognize you. This all seems like a dream!"

The lords and courtiers accompanying him remarked to one another, "We thought she was a very unusual nun, and now it appears we had good reason to do so."

Turning his gaze this way and that, the retired emperor could see that the many different plants in the garden were heavy with dew, their stalks bending down toward the hedges. Water brimmed in the paddy fields beyond, leaving hardly enough space for a snipe to alight.

Entering the hut, the retired emperor slid open the paper panel and walked in. In one room were enshrined the three venerable ones who come to greet

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became the adopted daughter of Senior Counselor Lord Kunitsuna and afterward was the wet nurse to the late emperor, going by the name Dainagon no Suke." Her voice trailed off in tears. The retired emperor, too, moved by the scene, could not keep from weeping.

Taking note of the situation, Kenreimon'in thought to herself, "I have abandoned all concern for worldly affairs, yet I would hate to have them see me dressed like this. If only there were someplace I could hide!" But such hopes were vain. Evening after evening she wet her sleeves as she dipped water for the Buddha's altar, and each dawn when she rose the dew on the mountain path further dampened her sleeves, so that they were seldom wrung dry. Added to these now were her tears. She could not return to the hilltop, nor could she enter her own rooms unseen. She stood in blank indecision until the old nun, Awa-no-naishi, went to her and took the flower basket from her arm.

THE SIX PATHS OF EXISTENCE (4)

"A nun must look as you do—why should it seem such a hardship?" said Awa-no-naishi. "You must receive His Majesty so that he may begin his journey back." Kenreimon'in accordingly returned to her hut.

"In front of the window where I recite a single invocation of the Buddha's name, I look for the rays of light that proclaim his advent. By my brushwood door with ten invocations I await the host of holy ones coming to escort me. But how strange and beyond all thought is this visit from Your Majesty!" She wept as she greeted him.

The retired emperor surveyed her form and attire. "Even those beings in the abode of No-Thought, though they live for eighty thousand kalpas," he said, "must suffer the sadness of inevitable extinction. Even those in the Sixth Heaven[338] of the realm of form cannot escape the pain of the five marks of decay.[339] The delights of longevity enjoyed by the god Indra in his Joyful Sight Citadel or the soaring pavilions of the god Brahma in the midst of the Meditation Heavens are no more than dreamlike boons, phantom pleasures of the moment.[340] All are bound to the wheel of unending change and transmigration, like cartwheels turning. The sadness of the Five Marks of Decay suffered by these heavenly beings must be borne, it seems, by us humans as well!" And

338. The Sixth Heaven is the highest realm in the world of desire and is inhabited by gods.

339. The Five Marks of Decay are when human beings' clothes become dirty, their hair flowers fade, their bodies smell, they sweat, and they no longer enjoy their original status.

340. Brahma and Indra are two of the main gods of Hindu mythology. They were incorporated into Buddhist cosmology as protectors of Buddhism, although their heavens are located in the Six Paths of Existence.

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then he added, "Who comes to visit you here? You must brood much on the events of the past."

"I do not receive visits from anyone," Kenreimon'in responded, "although I have some tidings now and then from my sisters, the wives of Takafusa and Nobutaka. In the past I would never, for a moment, have supposed that I would one day look to them for support." She wept as she said this, and the women attending her likewise wet their sleeves with tears.

Restraining her tears, Kenreimon'in spoke once more. "My current existence is no more than a passing tribulation, and when I think that it may lead to wisdom in the world to come, I look on it as joyful. I have made haste to join the latter-day disciples of Shakyamuni and reverently entrusted myself to Amida's original vow of salvation so that I may escape the bitterness of the five obstacles and three submissions imposed on a woman.[341] Three times daily and nightly I labor to purify the six senses, hopeful that I may immediately win rebirth in one of the nine grades of the Pure Land. My only prayer is that all we members of the Taira clan may gain enlightenment, always trusting that the three venerable ones will come to greet us. The face of my son, the late emperor, I will never forget, whatever world may come. I try to forget but I can never do so; I try to endure the pain but it is unendurable. There is no bond more compelling than that between parent and child. Day and night I make it my duty to pray for his salvation. And this endeavor has been like a good friend leading me into the path of the Buddha."

The retired emperor offered an answer. "Although I have been born in these far-off islands no bigger than scattered millet seeds, because I reverently observed in a past existence the Ten Good Acts of Conduct, I have been privileged in this one to become a ruler of ten thousand chariots. Everything I could wish for has been granted to me; my heart has been denied nothing. And most particularly, because I was fortunate enough to be born in an age when the Buddhist teachings are propagated, I have set my heart on practicing the Buddha's way and do not doubt that in the time to come I will be reborn in a far better place. We should have learned by now, I suppose, not to question the miseries of human existence. And yet, seeing you like this seems too pitiful a sight!"

The imperial lady began to speak once more. "I was the daughter of the Taira prime minister and the mother of the nation's ruler—anything in the entire realm and the four seas surrounding it was mine for the asking. Beginning with the rites that mark the advent of spring, through the seasonal changes of clothing, to the recitation of Buddha names that brings the year to a close, I

341. According to Buddhist belief, a woman may not become a Brahma, an Indra, a devil king, a wheel-turning king, or a buddha. She is expected to submit to and obey her father in childhood, her husband in maturity, and her son in old age when she is widowed.

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was waited on by all the high ministers and courtiers, from the regent on down. There were none of the hundred officials who did not look up to me with awe, as though I dwelled on the clouds of the Six Heavens of the realm of desire or the four Meditation Heavens, with the eighty thousand heavenly beings encircling me. I lived in the Seiryō or Shishinden palaces, curtained by jeweled hangings, in spring spending the days with my eyes fixed on the cherries of the Southern Pavilion; enduring the oppressive heat of summer's three months through the comfort of fountain waters; never left without companions to watch the cloud-borne autumn moon; on winter nights when the snow lay cold, I was swathed in layers of bed clothing. I wanted to learn the arts of prolonging life and evading old age, even if it meant seeking the herbs of immortality from the island of Penglai, for my sole wish was to live on and on. Day and night I thought of nothing but pleasure, believing that the happy fortune enjoyed by the heavenly beings could not surpass this life of mine.

"And then, in early autumn of the Juei era [1183], because of threats from Kiso no Yoshinaka or some such person, all the members of our Taira clan saw the capital that had been our home grow as distant as the clouds themselves, and looked back as our former dwellings in Fukuhara were reduced to fire-blackened fields. We made our way by water from Suma to Akashi, places that in the past were mere names to us, grieving over our lot. By day we plied the boundless waves, moistening our sleeves with spray; at night we cried until dawn with the plovers on sandy points along the shore. Moving from bay to bay, island to island, we saw scenery pleasant enough but could never forget our old home. With no place to take refuge, we knew the misery of the Five Marks of Decay and the prospect of certain extinction.

"Separation from loved ones, meeting with suffering, encounter with all that is hateful—in my life as a human being, I have experienced all of these. The Four Sufferings,[342] the Eight Sufferings[343]—not one of them have I been spared! And then, in a place called Dazaifu in the province of Chikuzen, we were driven away by some Koreyoshi person who refused us lodging in Kyushu—a broad land of mountains and plains but with nowhere that we could take shelter. Once more, autumn drew to a close, but the moon, which we used to watch from the heights of the nine-tier palace, this year we watched from salt-sea paths eightfold in their remoteness.

"So the days and nights passed until in the Tenth Month, the Godless Month, the middle captain, Kiyotsune, declared, 'The capital has fallen to the

342. The Four Sufferings are the suffering of birth, the suffering of old age, the suffering of sickness, and the suffering of death.

343. The Eight Sufferings are the suffering of birth, the suffering of old age, the suffering of sickness, the suffering of death, the suffering of separation from loved ones, the suffering of being with those one hates, the suffering of frustrated desires, and the suffering of attachment to self.

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He wept as he spoke these words, and the lords and courtiers attending him all wet their sleeves with tears. Kenreimon'in, too, broke down in tears, as did her women companions.

THE DEATH OF THE IMPERIAL LADY (5)

While they were speaking, the bell of the Jakkō-in sounded, signaling the close of the day, and the sun sank beyond the western hills. The retired emperor, reluctant though he was to leave, wiped away his tears and prepared to begin the journey back.

All her memories of the past brought back to her once more, Kenreimon'in could scarcely stem the flood of tears with her sleeve. She stood watching as the imperial entourage set out for the capital, watching until it was far in the distance. Then she turned to the image of the Buddha and, speaking through her tears, uttered this prayer: "May the spirit of the late emperor and the souls of all my clanspeople who perished attain complete and perfect enlightenment; may they quickly gain the wisdom of the Buddhas!"

In the past she had faced eastward with this petition: "Great Deity of the Grand Shrine of Ise and Great Bodhisattva Hachiman, may the Son of Heaven be blessed with most wonderful longevity, may he live a thousand autumns, ten thousand years!" But now she changed direction and, facing west with palms pressed together, in sorrow spoke these words: "May the souls of all those who have perished find their way to Amida's Pure Land!"

On the sliding panel of her sleeping room she had inscribed the following poems:

> When did my heart learn such ways?
> Of late I think so longingly of palace companions I once knew!
>
> The past, too, has vanished like a dream—
> my days by this brushwood door cannot be long in number!

The following poem is reported to have been inscribed on a pillar of Kenreimon'in's retreat by Minister of the Left Sanesada, one of the officials who accompanied the retired emperor on his visit:

> You who in past times were likened to the moon—
> dwelling now deep in these faraway mountains, a light
> no longer shining—.

Once, when Kenreimon'in was bathed in tears, overwhelmed by memories of the past and thoughts of the future, she heard the cry of a mountain cuckoo and wrote this poem:

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Come then, cuckoo, let us compare tears—
I too do nothing but cry out in a world of pain.

The Taira warriors who survived the Dan-no-ura hostilities and were taken prisoner were paraded through the main streets of the capital and then either beheaded or sent into exile far from their wives and children. With the exception of Taira no Yorimori, not one escaped execution or was permitted to remain in the capital.

With regard to the forty or more Taira wives, no special punitive measures were taken—they were left to join their relatives or to seek aid from persons they had known in the past. But even those fortunate enough to find themselves seated within sumptuous hangings were not spared the winds of uncertainty, and those who ended in humble brushwood dwellings could not live free of dust and turmoil. Husbands and wives who had slept pillow to pillow now found themselves at the far ends of the sky. Parents and children who had nourished each other no longer even knew each other's whereabouts. Although their loving thoughts never for a moment ceased, lament as they might, they had somehow to endure these things.

And all of this came about because the lay priest and prime minister Taira no Kiyomori, holding the entire realm within the four seas in the palm of his hand, showed no respect for the ruler above or the slightest concern for the masses of common people below. He dealt out sentences of death or exile in any fashion that suited him, took no heed of how the world or those in it might view his actions—and this is what happened! There can be no room for doubt—it was the evil deeds of the father, the patriarch, that caused the heirs and offspring to suffer this retribution!

After some time had gone by, Kenreimon'in fell ill. Grasping the five-color cord attached to the hand of Amida Buddha, the central figure in the sacred triad, she repeatedly invoked his name: "Hail to the Thus Come One Amida, lord of teachings of the Western Paradise—may you guide me there without fail!" The nuns Dainagon-no-suke and Awa-no-naishi attended her on her left and right, their voices raised in unrestrained weeping, for they sensed in their grief that her end was now at hand. As the sound of the dying woman's recitations grew fainter and fainter, a purple cloud appeared from the west, the room became filled with a strange fragrance, and the strains of music could be heard in the sky. Human life has its limits, and that of the imperial lady ended in the middle days of the Second Month in the second year of the Kenkyū era [1191].

Her two female attendants, who from the time she became imperial consort had never once been parted from her, were beside themselves with grief at her passing, helpless though they were to avert it. The support on which they had depended from times past had now been snatched from them, and they were left destitute, yet even in that pitiable state they managed to hold memorial services each year on the anniversary of her death. And in due time they, too, we are told, imitating the example of the dragon king's daughter in her attain-

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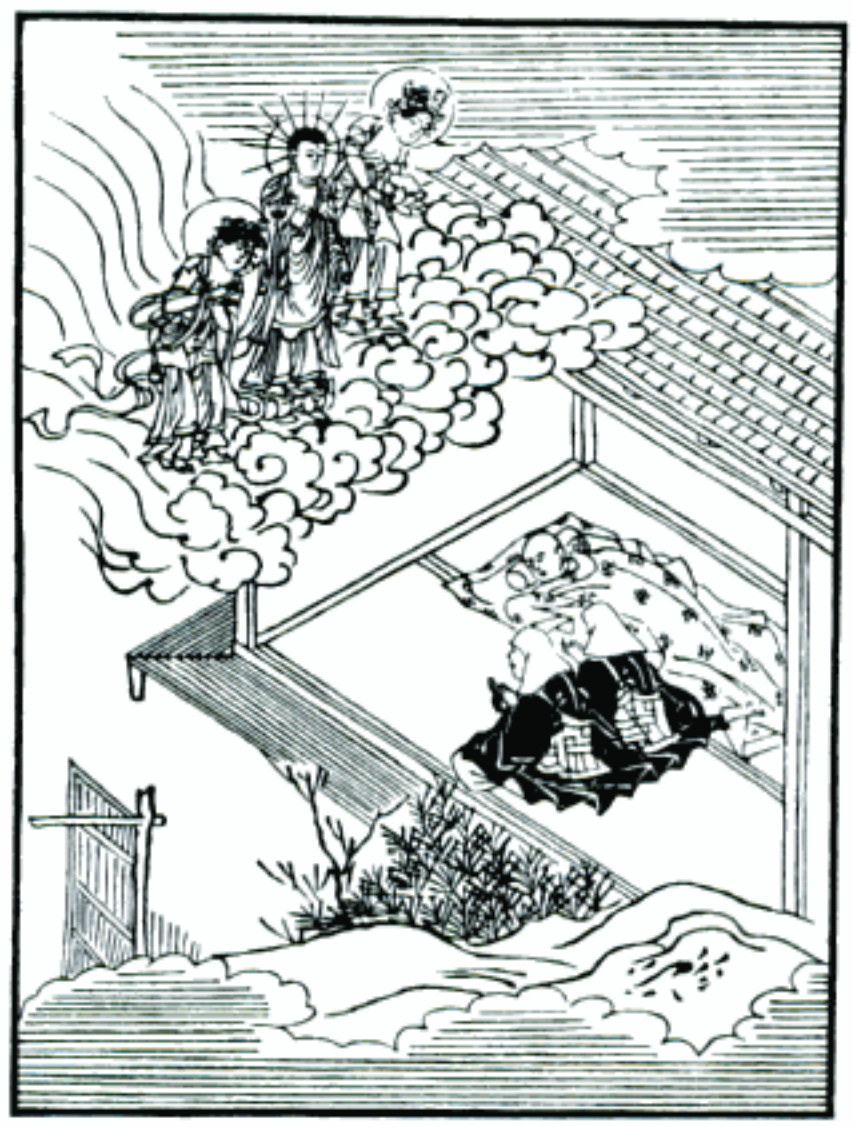

Amida Buddha and bodhisattvas arrive on a lavender cloud to meet the dying retired empress. (A 1656 Meireki woodblock edition, by permission of Shogakukan)

ment of enlightenment and following in the footsteps of Queen Vaidehi, fulfilled their long-cherished hopes for rebirth in the Pure Land.

[Translated by Burton Watson]

TRAVEL DIARIES

From the late twelfth century through the end of the sixteenth century, legislative and judicial power gradually came to rest in the hands of the warrior class, even though the courtier class continued to exert political influence well into the Muromachi period (1392–1573). This dual-polity system, with the bakufu headquarters in Kamakura and the court capital in Kyoto, required constant travel between Kamakura and Kyoto. A system of highways, checkpoints, and inns developed to facilitate, monitor, and house the increase in traffic. There also was a renewed interest in pilgrimages to major shrines and temples. Following the lead of the itinerant poet Saigyō (1118–1190) and the ascetic Ippen (1239–1289), travel itself came to be regarded as a form of religious practice (*yugyō*). The growing interest in travel extended to medieval poets (peripatetic waka and renga poets) and diarists who followed the tracks of legendary poets and wrote travel diaries.

From the early thirteenth into the fourteenth century, the production of travel literature (*kikōbun*) developed to an unprecedented degree. From the Jōkyū rebellion of 1221 until the early fourteenth century, a large number of Japanese literary works refer to journeys both actual and imagined. Travel appears as a literary topic in every major genre of the time, from military chronicles to anecdotes, diaries, classical poetry, linked verse, and nō drama. Among these literary travelers were a growing number of female writers. Two literary examples

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that exemplify this new trend are *The Diary of the Sixteenth Night* (*Izayoi nikki*, 1283), a travel diary describing Nun Abutsu's (1222–1283) trip to Kamakura, and *The Confessions of Lady Nijō* (*Towazugatari*, 1306?), which describes the author's travels after being banished from the imperial palace.

In the poetic maps charted by medieval poets and writers, the capital forms the central axis from which all other locations were measured. Authors who recorded their journeys viewed themselves within a history of travel poetry, which included *The Tales of Ise*, *The Tale of Genji*, and the poetry of Saigyō, which served as inspiration for their journeys. In other words, medieval travelers perceived their journeys through the double lens of their own experience and that of their predecessors whose journeys they retraced through visits to poetic sites. This tradition continued in the Muromachi period with texts like Sōgi's *Journey to Shirakawa* (*Shirakawa kikō*, 1468).

NUN ABUTSU

Nun Abutsu (1222–1283) was one of the major court poets active during the late Kamakura period. Early in her life, her mother remarried a provincial governor, Taira Norishige, who adopted Abutsu as his daughter. Through his connections at court, Abutsu was taken into the service of Princess Ankamon'in (1209–1283), whom she served from the age of fifteen for approximately five years. Here Abutsu was able to gain experience as a poet and as a scholar. *Fitful Slumbers* (*Utatane*), an autobiographical work set in her teens, describes a failed love affair and her reclusion at a temple. Abutsu appears to have taken the tonsure and served as a nun at Hokke-ji temple. She later returned to secular life, married, and had a son and a daughter.

At the age of thirty-one, she was commissioned by Fujiwara Tameie (1198–1275), a key member of the Mikohidari waka house, to produce a copy of *The Tale of Genji* for his daughter. Tameie's father, Fujiwara Teika (1162–1241), was a compiler of the *Shinkokinshū*, and his grandfather Shunzei (1114–1204) was the founder of the Mikohidari poetry line. Although Tameie's principal wife had given birth to several sons, he took up residence with Abutsu, and over the next twelve years she bore him three more sons. Abutsu's relationship with Tameie gave her access to his vast repository of literary documents, and her activities as a scholar and poet appear to have expanded as a result. Abutsu participated in numerous court poetry contests, and forty-eight of her poems were selected for imperial waka anthologies, including three poems in the *Shokukokinwakashū* (1265).

Abutsu's best-known work is a travel diary entitled *The Diary of the Sixteenth Night* (*Izayoi nikki*, 1283). It is considered one of the earliest examples of travel literature, a genre of autobiographical works depicting poetic journeys. In addition to *Utatane* and *Izayoi nikki*, Abutsu produced the poetry treatise *Evening Crane* (*Yoru no tsuru*) and the primer for women *Nursemaid's Letter* (*Menoto no fumi*), as well as numerous poetry collections.

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THE DIARY OF THE SIXTEENTH NIGHT (*IZAYOI NIKKI*, 1283)

The Diary of the Sixteenth Night was written by Abutsu between 1279 and 1283 in an effort to support a land claim for her son. When Abutsu married Tameie, he had already willed most of his property to his elder son (by a former marriage), Tameuji. Despite having made Tameuji the heir to his landholdings and literary collection, Tameie began to give his poetic treatises and property to Abutsu. Before his death, he also gave their eldest son, Tamesuke, a landholding, the Hosokawa Estate, which he had formerly willed to Abutsu's rival Tameuji. When Tameie died, however, the inheritance document was not honored, and the land was transferred to its former designee, Tameuji.

In 1279, four years after her husband's death, Abutsu left her home in the capital to travel to Kamakura, the seat of the military government. After failing to secure her son's right to the land inheritance that his father had awarded him in 1273, Abutsu sought to appeal ownership of the Hosokawa Estate at the warrior tribunal in Kamakura. *Izayoi nikki* describes Abutsu's travel preparations, her journey, and finally her residence in Kamakura while awaiting the trial. The diary outlines her complaint against Tameuji, glorifies her devotion as a wife and widow of Tameie, and demonstrates how Tameuji's lack of filial piety proved him unworthy of the land inheritance. Abutsu's case is made not only through direct appeal to the reader but also through the skillful use of poetry to demonstrate her ability as a Mikohidari poet and her determination to pass on these poetic practices to her sons. Abutsu died before the case was decided, but her efforts bore fruit thirty-four years later, when in 1313 the case finally was determined in Abutsu's favor and the land was transferred to her son Tamesuke.

Children of today seem to have no sense of their relationship to the name of a certain book said to have been discovered long ago in a wall.[344] Although the records[345] my husband wrote down over and over again are definitive and as numerous as the arrowroot of the hills of Mizukuki,[346] it seems a parent's ad-

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344. Abutsu alludes to the *Classic of Filial Piety* by Confucius (J. *Kōkyō*, Ch. *Xiao jing*). According to a later compiler, when the residence of Confucius was being torn down, the work was discovered inside a stone box lodged in the wall. Abutsu implies that Tameuji, the son of Tameie by his former wife, has forgotten any sense of propriety and filial piety in failing to respect his father's decision to leave the Hosokawa Estate to Abutsu's son Tamesuke.

345. The records in question are two retraction documents (*kuikaeshi*) that Tameie wrote in 1273 and 1274, which awarded the Hosokawa Estate to Abutsu's son Tamesuke.

346. An allusion to Fujiwara no Teika, *Sengohyaku-ban utaawase*, Autumn 1: "The arrowroot of the hills of Mizukuki is blown over by the first wind of autumn that flips the sleeve of my light robe." In classical poetry, the arrowroot leaves were known for turning over in the wind to show their lighter underside. Abutsu links the arrowroot with the term "over and over again" (*kaesu gaesu*).

Material com direitos autorais

harubaru to	Journeying far,
Futamurayama o	I crossed
yukisugite	Mount Futamura,
nao sue tadoru	but still I wander
nobe no yūyami	through the dusky fields.

I heard people say, "We'll spend the night at Yatsuhashi, Eight Bridges."[372] The darkness hid the bridges from sight.

sasagani no	As night fell,
kumode ayauki	I could not cross
Yatsuhashi o	the dangerous
yūgure kakete	eight-legged spider
watari kanetsuru	bridge at Yatsuhashi.

Departing from Yatsuhashi, Abutsu travels through the mountains covered with autumn leaves. She composes poems at Mount Miyaji, Watōdo, the hills of Takashi, Hamana Bridge, and Hamamatsu before arriving at Tenchū.

On the twenty-third we arrived at a place called Tenchū.[373] As I got onto the boat I recalled how Saigyō was treated long ago and felt saddened.[374] There was only one boat made of fitted wood, and since there were many people crossing the river, it shuttled people back and forth without pause.

mizu no awa no	Behold
uki yo o wataru	our fleeting lives[375]
hodo o miyo	like froth upon the water;
hayase no seze ni	a small boat guided without pause
sao mo yasumezu	by a pole across the rapids.

Abutsu spends the night at Mitsuke and then passes Saya no Nakayama, Kiku River, Mount Utsu, Tegoshi, and Warashina River before crossing Kiyomi Barrier.

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372. Located in present Yatsuhashi-chō, Chiryū City, Aichi Prefecture.

373. Tenchū is an old name for the Tenryū, a major river drawing from Suwa Lake and emptying into the Enshū Sea in present-day Shizuoka Prefecture.

374. The Bunmei version of *Saigyō monogatari* notes that when Saigyō was traveling to the eastern provinces, as he was waiting to cross the river by boat at Tenryū, a warrior appeared, commanded him to give up his seat on the boat, and then whipped him so he would get off.

375. *Ukiyo* (floating world) is a linked word (*engo*) with *awa* (froth).

Material com direitos autorais

After crossing Fuji River, they pass the Izu provincial capital and continue along the Hakone route via Yusaka to Sakawa. Traveling along the coast, they finally arrive at Kamakura.

The place where I live in the east is called Tsukikage no Yatsu, the Valley of Moonlight.[382] It lies along the edge of the mountains, near the seashore, and the wind sweeps through. Since it is near a mountain temple,[383] it is deserted and desolate. The sound of the waves and of the wind rustling through the pines is ceaseless.

As I anxiously awaited news from the capital, I received from a trustworthy messenger what appeared to be a reply from the person to whom I had sent a letter via the mountain ascetic I met at Mount Utsu:[384]

tabigoromo	Accompanied by tears,[385]
namida o soete	your travel cloak
Utsu no yama	must have been wet by a drizzle,
shigurenu hima mo	even as the rain abates
sazo shigure kemu	on Mount Utsu.

yukuri naku	When you departed
akugare ideshi	hastily,
izayoi no	the moon of the sixteenth night
tsuki ya okurenu	stayed with you
katami naru beki	as a keepsake of the capital.[386]

I had set off from the capital on the sixteenth day of the Tenth Month, and it seems she had not forgotten the moon of the sixteenth night. Her kindness moved me, and I sent a response only to the final poem:

meguri au	I entrust myself to the future
sue o zo tanomu	when we shall meet again,
yukuri naku	although life is unexpected,
sora ni ukareshi	like the moon of the sixteenth night
izayoi no tsuki	that floats in the sky.

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382. Near Gokuraku Temple in Kamakura.

383. The Shingon Risshū temple Gokuraku-ji.

384. Earlier Abutsu met a monk who happened to know her son, the Ajari, with whom she was traveling. Since he was returning to the capital, Abutsu gave him a letter to be delivered to her daughter. Unlike Abutsu's letter, which was entrusted to a monk, the response has been carried to the capital by someone on official business, thus the "trustworthy messenger."

385. Tears of longing for the capital.

386. The moon in the poem can also be read as the daughter's keepsake of her mother.

Material com direitos autorais

The remainder of the diary describes Abutsu's correspondence with friends and family from the capital. She receives poems from her sons Tamesuke and Tamemori that she corrects and returns in order to improve their poetic skills. Some versions of the text contain a final section consisting of a long poem (chōka) *in which Abutsu reasserts her position as the transmitter of the Mikohidari way of poetry and lays claim to the Hosokawa Estate for her children.*

[Introduction and translation by Christina Laffin]

LADY NIJŌ

Lady Nijō (1258–1329?) was the daughter of a mid-Kamakura-period aristocrat, the senior counselor (*dainagon*) Koga Masatada, who raised her as a child and to whom she was very close. Her mother, who died when Nijō was only two, was the daughter of the senior counselor Shijō Takachika. Both the Koga and the Shijō families were noted poets. Nijō (literally, Second Ward) was the name she was given as a lady-in-waiting (*nyōbō*) at court. After her mother's death, Nijō was raised in the imperial palace, at the imperial residence of the retired emperor GoFukakusa (r. 1246–1259, 1243–1304), who referred to her as "my child" (*agako*).

In 1271, at the age of fourteen, Nijō became involved with GoFukakusa, whom her mother had earlier served and apparently initiated into the ways of love. (The memoirs imply that the mother's death wish was that Nijō be given to GoFukakusa, making Nijō a kind of surrogate for the lost lover-mother.) A year later, in 1272, Nijō's father passed away. According to her memoirs, Nijō became romantically or sexually involved with various men while remaining GoFukakusa's lover and bore children to at least three of the men, including GoFukakusa. Although Nijō's position among GoFukakusa's women remained secondary to that of his principal consort (Empress Higashi-Nijō), she apparently was given privileges, such as riding in GoFukakakusa's carriage, that were allowed only to women of the highest status.

According to her memoirs, Nijō had a secret affair with Yuki no Akebono (Snow Dawn), or Akebono, who is thought to be Saionji Sanekane (b. 1249), a powerful politician who was close to GoFukakusa and a noted man of letters, with fifty-seven poems in the noted imperial waka anthology the *Gyokuyōshū* (1312). In 1275, at the age of eighteen, Nijō began another secret affair with a priest nicknamed Ariake no Tsuki (Dawn Moon), or Ariake, who died in 1281. Ariake is assumed to be Shōjo, a prince and a high-ranking Shingon priest at Ninna Temple. In 1283, after altercations with Higashi-Nijō and with GoFukakusa's dwindling interest in her, Nijō was forced out of the imperial court, and around 1288 she took holy vows. She then traveled to the eastern provinces, the first of many journeys, some of which were directly

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inspired by the priest Saigyō. GoFukakusa died in 1304, and the last recorded date in Nijō's memoirs is 1306, the third anniversary of the retired emperor's death.

THE CONFESSIONS OF LADY NIJŌ (*TOWAZUGATARI*, 1306?)

The Confessions of Lady Nijō was discovered in 1938, but because of the wartime government, which had censored parts of *The Tale of Genji*, it was ignored until 1950, when it was first printed. It was not until the 1960s, however, that *Confessions* was considered a significant part of the history of Japanese literature, particularly as a major contribution by a woman writer. *Confessions* appears to have remained an unread or a secret text throughout the medieval period, and only *The Clear Mirror* (*Masukagami*, 1338–1376), a historical tale describing the history of imperial succession in the Kamakura period, alludes to it.

Towazugatari (literally, "narrated without being asked") consists of five books, which describe the life of the author from the age of fourteen to forty-nine. The text takes the form of a memoir of a woman of an advanced age looking back on the last thirty-five years of her life. The first three volumes (until the age of twenty-eight) focus on her love life at the imperial court: her relationships with five different men, beginning with the retired emperor GoFukakusa, Akebono, and Ariake, and her bearing children to each of them. The last two volumes, or the second half, describe her life after she becomes a nun and depict her travels throughout the country, with the text often taking the form of a travel diary. In these last two volumes, Nijō periodically traces the footsteps of Saigyō, the late Heian poet-priest traveler, traveling between Kyoto and Kamakura as well as going to Zenkō-ji temple, Nara, Kōchi, Tsutsukushima, Shikoku, and other places. She prays for the spirits of her dead children, for the deceased Ariake, for her father, and, most of all, for the spirit of GoFukakusa, who dies in volume 5. Shortly before his death, Nijō's father tells Nijō that even if things do not go well with GoFukakusa, she must never serve two masters and that if the relationship sours, she should take holy vows and dedicate herself to her own salvation as well as that of her parents—a last testament that has a profound effect on her later life.

At the beginning of *Towazugatari*, the reigning emperor is Kameyama (r. 1259–1274), and the retired emperor is GoFukakusa (r. 1246–1259). GoFukakusa (b. 1243), fifteen years older than Nijō, was the son of Emperor GoSaga (r. 1242–1246) and became emperor in 1246, at the age of four. But in 1259, he was forced by the retired emperor GoSaga to cede the throne to his younger brother Kameyama, thereby beginning a bitter rivalry between two imperial lines. *Towazugatari* begins in 1271, twelve years after GoFukakusa was forced to abdicate the throne.

At the beginning of the diary, Nijō's father and the retired emperor GoFukakusa arrange to give Nijō, fourteen at the time, to GoFukakusa. Her father considers this

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an honor, but apparently his daughter is not informed of the details and is shocked when the relationship is consummated. After Nijō has been reintroduced at court, Empress Higashi-Nijō, GoFukakusa's principal consort, becomes jealous and makes life difficult for Nijō. While serving GoFukakusa, Nijō has a secret relationship with Akebono, a politician in the service of GoFukakusa. Later, seemingly with GoFukakusa's implicit approval, she also begins a relationship with Ariake, a priest who is assumed to be GoFukakusa's half brother.

As does the third volume of Mother of Michitsuna's *Kagerō Diary* (*Kagerō nikki*), the first major literary diary by a woman, *The Confessions of Lady Nijō* assumes a strong monogatari cast. Likewise, it also strongly resembles *The Tale of Genji* and often transforms the author into a monogatari heroine. Nijō's secret lovers Akebono and Ariake even have elegant, monogatari-type nicknames. Nijō's first shocking night with GoFukakusa recalls the experience of the young Murasaki with Genji, when Genji's role suddenly shifts from "father" to "lover." Like Murasaki, who was a surrogate for Fujitsubo, Nijō may also be a surrogate for her lost mother, GoFukakusa's first lover. When Nijō is taken by the retired emperor in a carriage to his imperial residence, the scene is reminiscent of Genji and Yūgao in the "Evening Faces" chapter, and the author feels as if she were in an "an old romance." Like the Kiritsubo lady, who was loved by the emperor but crushed by her female rivals, Nijō is eventually ousted by Empress Higashi-Nijō, who bears some resemblance to the Kokiden lady. Similarly, Nijō's triangular relationship with Ariake and GoFukakusa echoes the Genji/Third Princess/Kashiwagi triangle in the "New Herbs" (Wakana) chapters of *The Tale of Genji*, in which Kashiwagi (like Ariake) dies tormented by a transgression that is exposed to the transgressed party.

If the first three volumes of *Confessions* look back to the first two parts of *The Tale of Genji*, the last two volumes suggest the wanderings of Ukifune, with the nun Nijō becoming a kind of "female Saigyō." Nijō's travels are metaphorical in that she continues to wander, attached to and nostalgic for the past even as she seeks spiritual salvation. *Confessions* resembles the *Sarashina Diary* in combining a woman's autobiographical, confessional narrative with a travel diary (*kikōbun*). Like Daughter of Takasue, the author of the *Sarashina Diary*, Nijō looks back on her past to find the causes for her present suffering, which leads to the writing of an autobiography that has been interpreted as a Buddhist confession (*zange*). If Daughter of Takasue reflects on the sin of having been obsessed with vernacular fiction, Nijō reflects on her past affairs, particularly those that betrayed her patron and lover GoFukakusa. In *The Tales of the Heike*, which was composed and recited to commoner audiences at this time, female characters who take vows are regarded as a social ideal, but *Confessions* gives a highly ambiguous, psychological view of such a world. The following selections focus on Nijō's relationships with GoFukakusa, her father, and the high priest Ariake.

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of the year, we'd like everything to be exactly right.[393] I summoned you expressly to serve him."

"But it's not the eve of a seasonal change. What directional taboo brings him out here?"

"What a naïve child you are," he replied amid the general laughter. How was I to understand?

They were setting up folding screens and small portable curtains in my bedroom. "Such preparations! Is my room going to be used too?" But my questions were met with smiles instead of answers. No one would tell me a thing.

That evening a three-layered white gown and deep maroon pleated trousers were laid out for me to wear, and elaborate care was taken in scenting the house and placing the incense burners where they would be unnoticed. After the lamps had been lit, my stepmother brought me a gay small-sleeved gown and told me to put it on. Later my father came in, hung several gowns about the room for their decorative effect, and said to me, "Don't fall asleep before His Majesty arrives. Serve him well. A lady-in-waiting should never be stubborn, but should do exactly as she's told." Without the least idea what these instructions were all about and feeling bewildered by all the commotion, I leaned against the brazier and fell asleep.

What happened after that I am not sure. His Majesty GoFukakusa arrived without my knowing it, and there must have been great excitement when my father welcomed him and refreshments were served, but I was innocently sleeping. When GoFukakusa overheard the flustered cries of "Wake her up!" he said, "It's all right, let her sleep," so no one disturbed me.

I don't know how long I had slept leaning against the brazier just inside the sliding door, my outer gown thrown up over my head, but I suddenly awakened to find the lights dim, the curtains lowered, and inside the sliding door, right beside me, a man who had made himself comfortable and fallen fast asleep.

"What is this?" I cried. No sooner did I get up to leave, than His Majesty wakened. Without rising he began to tell me how he had loved me ever since I was a child, how he had been waiting until now when I was fourteen, and so many other things that I have not words enough to record them all. But I was not listening; I could only weep until even his sleeves were dampened with my tears as he tried to comfort me. He did not attempt to force me, but he said, "You have been indifferent to me for so long that I thought on this occasion perhaps . . . How can you continue to be so cold, especially now that everyone knows about this?"

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393. To satisfy complex taboos pertaining to the avoidance of unlucky directions, people were often forced to spend a night away from their permanent residences. This was especially common on the eve of spring, a date determined by a solar calendar rather than the official lunar one.

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So that's how it was. This was not even a secret dream, everyone knew about it, and no doubt as soon as I woke my troubles would begin. My worries were sad proof that I had not completely lost my senses at least, but I was wretched. If this was what was in store for me, why hadn't I been told beforehand? Why didn't he give me a chance to discuss it with my father? How could I face anyone now? I moaned and wept so much that he must have thought me very childish, but I could not help myself, for his very presence caused me pain.

The night passed without my offering him even a single word of response. When at dawn we heard someone say, "His Majesty will be returning today, won't he?" GoFukakusa muttered, "Now to go back pretending something happened!" and prepared to leave. "Your unexpected coldness has made me feel that the pledge I made long ago—when you still wore your hair parted in the middle—was all in vain.[394] You might at least behave in a way that other people won't find too strange. What will people think if you seclude yourself?" He tried both scolding and comforting me, but I refused to answer. "Oh, what's the use!" he said at last; then he got up, put on his robe, and ordered his carriage. When I heard Father inquiring about His Majesty's breakfast, I felt as though I could never face him again. I thought longingly of yesterday.

After GoFukakusa had gone, I lay utterly still with my outer gown pulled up over my head, pretending to sleep, until the arrival of a letter from him threw me into even greater misery. To add to my wretchedness my stepmother and grandmother came in full of questions. "What's the matter?" they asked. "Why don't you get up?"

"I don't feel well after last night," I blurted out, only to realize with dismay that they thought it was because I had shared my pillow with a man for the first time.

In great excitement someone entered with the letter I had no intention of reading. The royal messenger was waiting uneasily for a reply, and my attendants were wringing their hands not knowing what to do, until finally someone suggested, "Go tell her father." This, I knew, would be the most unbearable ordeal of all.

"Aren't you feeling well?" Father asked when he arrived. When they brought up the matter of the letter he said, "What childishness is this? Surely you intend to answer it?" I heard him opening the letter. It was a poem written on thin purple paper:

> Friends for many years, yet now your perfume haunts
> my last night's sleeves that never lay on yours.

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394. A girl wore shoulder-length hair parted in the middle until her coming-of-age ceremony, when a section of it was tied up on top of her head.

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Perhaps they were not for me, those drops upon your sleeves,
yet word of them makes my tears flow.

Several days later I returned to the palace—this time openly, in the usual fashion—yet I grew uncomfortable when people immediately began to talk. "The Senior Counselor certainly treasures her," they would say. "He's sent her with all the ceremony due an official consort."

The gossip spread, and before long Empress Higashi-Nijō began to be unpleasant. As the days dragged by I became wretched. I cannot claim that His Majesty really neglected me, but I was depressed when days passed between his visits, and although I didn't feel I could complain—as his other ladies did—about who kept him company at night, every time it fell to my lot to conduct another woman to him I understood anew the painful ways of this world. Yet I was haunted by a line of poetry that kept coming to mind: "Will I live to cherish memories of these days?"[401] The days passed, each dawn turned to dusk, and autumn arrived. . . .

Was it because of the rains of the Fifth Month, which left nothing untouched, that my father's spirits were damper than the wettest autumn day? Or was he so thin and worn because he had given up his custom of never spending a night alone and had even stopped going to drinking parties? On the night of the fourteenth, as he was coming home in his carriage from Buddhist services at Ōtani, the outriders accompanying him noticed that he looked sallow and they knew something was seriously wrong. The doctor they summoned made a diagnosis of jaundice caused by too much worry and began administering moxa treatments. I began to worry about him when I saw that his health was gradually deteriorating. Then in the Sixth Month, when I was already at my wits' end, I discovered that my own condition was not normal. But how could I mention it at such a time?

Father did not order any prayers for his recovery. "Since my condition seems hopeless anyhow, I don't want to waste a single day in joining His Majesty," he explained. For a few weeks he remained at his house at the corner of Rokkaku and Kushige streets before returning on the fourteenth of the Seventh Month to his Kawasaki home. He left his younger children behind so that he could quietly prepare for the end. I alone accompanied him, proud of having such responsibility. Father noticed that I was not my usual self, but at first he supposed I was not eating because of my worry for him. He tried to console me until he recognized my real condition and suddenly began to hope that his life might be prolonged for a while. For the first time he had religious services

401. Fujiwara no Kiyosuke, *Shinkokinshū*, no. 1843: "Will I live to cherish memories of these days too? What once was sad now seems dear."

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My father, who was immensely pleased by this, ordered saké to be prepared. I wondered sadly if this would be the last such occasion. Father made Takaaki a present of Shiogama, the highly prized ox he had received from the prince who headed the Ninna Temple.

Because Father had felt better on this day, I had a glimmer of hope that he might improve. When it grew late I lay down beside him to rest and promptly fell asleep. He awakened me abruptly: "It's useless. I am able to forget the grief of setting out, perhaps even today or tomorrow, on an unknown path, but my thoughts keep dwelling on the one thing that grieves me. Just to watch you innocently sleeping there makes me wretched. Ever since your mother died when you were only two, I alone have worried about you. Although I have many other children, I feel that I have lavished on you alone the 'love due three thousand.' When I see you smile, I find 'a hundred charms'; when you are sad, I too grieve.[405] I have watched the passing of fifteen springs and autumns with you, but now I must depart. If you would serve His Majesty and not incur his displeasure, always be respectful; never be negligent. The ways of this world are often unexpected. If you should incur the ill will of your Lord and of the world and find you are unable to manage, you are immediately to enter holy orders where you can work toward your own salvation, repay your debts to your parents, and pray that we might all be together in paradise. But if, finding yourself forsaken and alone, you decide to serve another master or try to make your way by entering any other household whatsoever, consider yourself disowned even though I am already dead. For the truth is that relationships between men and women are not to be tampered with, inasmuch as they are not limited to this world alone. It would be shameful indeed if you remained in society only to blacken the name of our great family. It is only after retiring from society that you can do as you will without causing suffering." Father spoke at such length that I took these as his final instructions to me.

The bells were tolling daybreak when Nakamitsu[406] came in with the steamed plantain leaves that were regularly spread under the patient' s mat.

"Allow me to change the plantain," he said to my father.

"It doesn't matter now. The end is near," my father said. "Anything will do. First see to it that Nijō eats. I want to watch her. Hurry!" I did not see how I could eat, but my father insisted. I wondered sadly what would happen later when he was no longer around to watch me. Nakamitsu returned bringing a yam dish called *imomaki* in an unglazed pottery bowl. Everyone knows that *imomaki* is said to be an unhealthy food for a pregnant woman, and when the dish was set before me it looked so unappetizing that I merely pretended to eat it.

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405. These phrases are from the Chinese poet Bo Juyi's poem "A Song of Unending Sorrow," which describes the love of the emperor for his concubine Yang Guifei.

406. The eldest son and heir of Nakatsuna, Masatada's faithful steward.

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days, and he sweated profusely. With mounting concern, we summoned a doctor, who began a course of moxa applications, but when His Majesty's condition remained unchanged after ten treatments, we had services to prolong his life offered to the Bodhisattva Fugen on the eighth day of the ninth month. Another week passed with no change for the better.

In the midst of our concern and bewilderment a certain priest arrived—the one whose tear-filled eyes had revealed the depth of his feelings for me the previous spring.[407] On the occasions thereafter when I had gone to him bearing messages from GoFukakusa, he took advantage of every opportunity to declare his love, a tactic that invariably caused me to withdraw in confused embarrassment. But lately I had also received affectionate letters begging for some sort of reply. Once, in his presence, deeply troubled, I tore off a piece of my paper hair-band and wrote the single character for dream on it; then, instead of handing it to him properly, I put it down and left. On my next visit he threw me a fragrant star anise branch from the altar. Taking it aside, I discovered he had written on one of the leaves:

> Gathering altar branches at dawn, sleeves thoroughly damp—
> my dream left hanging—that I might see its end!

Moved by this, my heart softened, and I began to enjoy receiving messages from him, and even obliged him by responding amicably to his questions. Such was the situation when he arrived at the palace to minister to GoFukakusa.

His Majesty lamented, "I cannot go on this way."

The priest then advised him, "Tonight before the services begin, dispatch a messenger to the audience hall bearing something you have touched."[408]

When it was time for the early evening service to begin, His Majesty ordered me to take one of his robes to the audience hall. I arrived just after the assisting priests had retired to don their ceremonial vestments, so no one was in the dim hall except the priest I knew, Ariake. Approaching him I asked, "Where shall I put this robe?"

"Take it to the small room beside the sanctuary," he replied.

Going there, I found the room open and the lamps lit. I was taken aback, however, when I saw that the priest had followed me in, still dressed in his ordinary robes. What could have entered his mind?

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407. On the thirteenth day of the Third Month of the same year, GoFukakusa's half brother, Priest Shōjo, the head of Ninna Temple, confessed his love for Nijō while he was attending services at the palace.

408. It was believed that when an article of clothing or a paper doll was rubbed against an ailing body, the ailment would be transferred to the article itself, which was then presented to a priest or diviner, who ceremoniously disposed of it.

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"Even when we walk in paths of darkness, we are guided by the Lord Buddha,"[409] he said in a burst of sobbing before he embraced me.

For his sake I bore the outrage without crying for assistance; certainly he had not appeared to be a person who would act in this way. I whispered, "Some things are embarrassing even to Buddha," but my words were wasted; the moment had the unreality of a dream remembered. Suddenly the other priests trooped into the hall for the service, forcing Ariake to leave by a sliding door at the back.

"Return again after the final service," he urged me as he left. "Don't fail me."

I could not imagine he would be able to appear for the service, and yet there he was when it began, acting as though nothing had happened. I was afraid, for our meeting had occurred in the light of sacred lamps that leaves no shadows. How terrifying to think about the darkness of the world to come.

My heart was not entirely possessed by love, and yet late that night, without being seen, I slipped out and went to him. The service was already over, so our time together was unhurried. There was a disconcerting edge of sadness in his voice, and it was not without mixed feelings that I left him at the first sounds of dawn. He did have an undeniable way about him, a manner that was both pathetic and appealing. He seized the small-sleeved gown that I wore next to my body, giving me his in return as a memento of our love.

Back in my room I was composing myself for sleep when I noticed something in the hem of his gown. It was a slightly torn piece of paper, on which this poem was written:

> Reality? A dream? Still I cannot discern
> in my lingering anguish the moon this autumn night!

When had he found time to write this? I understood now how deeply he felt, and from that moment we took advantage of every opportunity to meet, being together practically every night. This meant that Ariake was offering prayers with an impure heart. I was ashamed of what the Buddha must think. Yet toward the end of the second week His Majesty showed improvement, and so the scheduled services were discontinued and the priests departed at the end of the third week.

I spent the night before he was to leave with Ariake. "How can we dare hope to meet after I leave the palace?" he asked. "I have allowed dust to accumulate on the floor of the meditation hall and the sacred altar fires to go out. If only you felt as I do, we could don the dark robes of hermits and retire deep within

409. "Paths of darkness" is a familiar metaphor for the passion and attachment that keeps one chained to this world.

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the mountains, never to worry again about this insubstantial world." Yet for my part, I was fearful of taking this step.

As the bells tolled, marking the arrival of dawn, he expressed his grief at our parting in moving language so beautiful that I wondered where he had learned the phrases. Yet I was genuinely moved, and it worried me that our tears might become the subject of gossip. After the final service was performed he departed from the palace, leaving me despondent. Now I was burdened with yet another futile worry.

A concert is given at court in imitation of the one found in The Tale of Genji, *and Nijō is chagrined that she does not get a good part. The leading role is that of Murasaki, and the next best role is that of the Third Princess. Nijō wants to take vows, but GoFukakusa dissuades her.*

Book 3 (1281)

. . . The talk between GoFukakusa and Ariake was more subdued than usual, and as I sat with them I became uneasy about what Ariake was actually thinking. Word came that the princess[410] had taken a turn for the worse, so GoFukakusa hurriedly left to go to her. "Please wait here until he returns," I said to Ariake.

The two of us were alone. Turning to me, Ariake began talking about the long and dreary days that had passed, and how he felt now. He wept so profusely he could not hide the tears with his sleeves. At a loss for a response, I simply listened—unaware that His Majesty had returned soon after he had left us and was standing on the other side of the sliding door, where he could surely hear Ariake's oft-repeated laments. We had no way of knowing His Majesty was there, and of course he understood the situation at once. When His Majesty finally entered the room, Ariake tried to pretend that nothing was wrong, but tears had spotted his sleeves. I feared what GoFukakusa would think at seeing them.

When it came time to light the torches Ariake left, and the night was quiet and lonely. His Majesty retired and asked me to massage his legs. He said as he lay there, "I have certainly heard the most extraordinary revelation. Now please explain what this all means. Ariake and I have been intimate since childhood, and I thought I knew him well enough to say that he would never have become involved in an affair of this nature." He dwelt so insistently on the subject that I soon decided it would be pointless to deny any part of it, and I related everything that had happened from the time we met until our separation.

410. Princess Yūgi, daughter of GoFukakusa's principal consort, Higashi-Nijō, and future wife of Emperor GoUda.

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helpless. On the twenty-first a long letter came. "Little did I realize we were meeting for the last time in this life," he wrote. "I have contracted the disease and shall probably die. My sins are deep, for my attachments to this world are excessive. What will be the outcome of the vision I beheld in my dream?" With the letter was this poem:

> Body thus consumed by passion, may the smoke it leaves
> drift through the sky in your direction.

Reading this remarkably calm letter, it suddenly came over me that we had perhaps spent our last dawn together.

> Consumed by passion you say—
> must I live to see the smoke that once was you?

I did not attempt to express all my feelings, for the occasion called for restraint; nor could I face the thought that the end was near.

On the twenty-fifth day of the Eleventh Month I learned that he had died. Life is more fleeting than a dream within a dream, I realized then, but I also knew the depth of my sin. It had all begun when he had pleaded with me in the poem that mentioned his "dream left hanging," and in the way he had looked the night he wrote "in my lingering anguish." Would I not have fewer worries now if we had parted forever that sad night?

That night it rained intermittently, and the clouds had an eerie cast about them, almost as if the sky were grieving in sympathy. His last letter, containing the poem about the smoke from his body drifting through the sky, lay in my letter box, and his scent clung to my pillow. Regrets haunted me. Were I to carry out my long-held desire to enter holy orders, there would be ugly rumors damaging to his reputation, which lived on even though he was dead. It was mortifying to be thus prevented from acting.

Toward dawn, as if in a dream, I learned that Ariake's page had arrived, and I hurried out to meet him. He wore a short yellow tunic with a green lining and a pheasant design. The sleeves were spotted with his tears. We talked and wept together in a flood of emotion that neither brush nor spoken words can convey.

The boy told me how Ariake had folded up the small-sleeved gown he had taken from me on our first night together and had placed it on his meditation mat. He continued, "On the night of the twenty-fourth he put it on next to his skin and told me he wanted to be cremated in it. You can imagine how painful it was to hear him say this." The boy then handed me a large letter box with an inlaid design of a *sakaki* tree. "I have come to deliver this to you, as Ariake instructed me," he said.

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The box contained a letter, but the brush marks looked more like bird tracks than writing. At the beginning was the phrase "of one night," and elsewhere the words "while I am still alive"—although I cannot be at all sure that I made them out correctly. As I pondered the letter, I longed to be swept away by the same stream that had taken him.

Now I'm afloat, now sinking. If the streams of the afterworld
had shoals where we might meet, I would hurl my body in to see you.

I was on the verge of breaking down completely.

The page recounted the manner of Ariake's cremation, telling how he had been wearing my gown and how the five Mahayana sutras he had copied were burned in his funeral pyre so as to accompany him. After giving the sorrowful account there was not a dry corner on either of his sleeves when he finally departed. I stared after him, my spirits darkened by intense anguish.

GoFukakusa also experienced profound grief, for he had been very close to Ariake. He sent me a solicitous letter, which did little to assuage my grief, containing this poem:

The image of the dawn moon now obscured by clouds
must linger with you still. How sorrowful a parting!

"Sorrow is the way of this world; yet how regrettable that his love was so extreme, his grief so deep."

Unable to find words for a proper reply, I merely sent this poem:

I count for nothing, yet my sorrows are far from trite,
nor has the image faded of dawn's moon.

I am unable to describe my feelings as the year drew to a close with each day and each night blurred by tears, so distraught that I was "unaware of the passing of spring."[422]

The messages that arrived from His Majesty now simply asked why I did not come back without demanding my immediate return, as in the past. Not once did he refer to it, but from this time on I was aware that His Majesty's affection for me was waning. This came as no surprise, for I had committed many indiscretions, however unintentionally; and realizing this, I was reluctant to return to the palace of my own accord.

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422. An allusion to a poem written by an ill poet, *Kokinshū*, no. 80: "Behind my curtain, unaware of the passing of spring—even the blossoms that waited have faded and fallen."

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In the Second Month of the following year I visited the Iwashimizu Hachiman Shrine on my way back to the capital. It was a long journey from Nara to Iwashimizu, and the sun was setting when I arrived and began to climb the Inohana trail leading to the inner garden. Among the pilgrims on the road was a dwarf from Iwami Province. Talk centered on his deformity; no one could imagine what kind of karma might have caused it. I noticed in passing that the residence facing the riding ground was open. That was where members of the imperial family stayed when visiting the shrine, but it was also open when the supervising priest was in residence. No one along the road had mentioned an imperial visit, and that was the farthest thing from my mind as we passed by. I was climbing up to the shrine itself when a man who seemed to be an imperial messenger approached and told me to go to the residence facing the riding ground. I asked him, "Who is staying there? Do you really know who I am? Certainly the message cannot be meant for me. Are you sure it is not for that dwarf?"

"No, I'm quite certain there's been no mistake. The summons is for you. Retired Emperor GoFukakusa has been here since yesterday."

I was dumbfounded. In all these months I had never forgotten him, but when I committed myself to a new way of life and took my leave from Lady Kyōgoku's apartments, I thought I would never see him again in this world. Besides, I had no idea anyone could recognize me now, dressed in these humble clothes that had been through frost and snow and hail. Indeed, I wondered who had spotted me. It was unlikely to have been His Majesty, but perhaps one of the ladies thought she recognized me and was even now wondering if she had made a mistake. I stood there in bewilderment until a junior imperial guardsman came to hurry me along. There was no opportunity to flee as they led me to an entrance on the north side of the building.

"Come inside where you won't be so conspicuous. Come on." It was His Majesty's voice, unchanged, speaking directly from the past. I did not know what he wanted, and my heart was so agitated that I was unable to move at all. "Hurry up, hurry up!" he urged. Hesitantly, I entered.

"I recognized you easily," he said. "You must realize that even though many months have passed, I have never forgotten you." He began talking of events past and present and of his weariness with this constantly changing world. We stayed up the entire night, until all too soon the sky began to brighten. "I must complete the religious retreat I have begun," he said. "We can have a more leisurely meeting another time." Before leaving he took off the three small-sleeved gowns he was wearing next to his skin and presented them to me. "Don't let anyone know of these keepsakes, yet keep them with you always." At that I forgot completely the past, the future, and the darkness of worlds yet to come. My heart filled with an inexpressible agony as the dawn brightened inexorably. His Majesty murmured goodbye, and I gazed fondly after him as he retired to an inner room. His presence lingered in the fragrance of his scent still clinging

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to my black robes. The gowns he had given me were so conspicuous they would certainly attract attention. I would have to wear them under my own dark robes, awkward though that was.

> To wear your gowns—love tokens from the distant past,
> now tears stain dark sleeves.

It seemed a dream within a dream as I departed with his image futilely contained in the tears on my sleeves. We had at least met this once, but I doubted that the opportunity for another quiet tryst would ever come. My wretched appearance must have shocked His Majesty; perhaps he even regretted having called me. To remain here brazenly as though awaiting another summons would have been much too indelicate. And so I prepared to set out for the capital, suppressing my emotions by lecturing my heart.

Before actually leaving, however, I wanted to observe for one last time—now as an outsider—His Majesty make the rounds of the shrine. Fearing that I might attract his attention in my nun's habit, I decided to put on the gowns he had given me over my own robes. Then I mingled with a group of court ladies to watch. Garbed now in priestly robes, His Majesty looked utterly different from how he had appeared in the past, and the change affected me deeply. When he began to ascend the steps to the shrine, Middle Counselor Suketaka, who was at that time still only an imperial adviser and chamberlain, took His Majesty's arm and helped him up. Last night His Majesty had remarked that our similar attire made him feel nostalgic, and he had recalled events going back as far as my childhood. His words still echoed in my ears, and his image shimmered in my tears as I descended the holy mountain. Even after I had turned north toward the capital, I felt as though part of me had remained behind on the mountain.

Book 5 (1304)

The prospect of a sea voyage so intrigued me that I decided to retrace the travels of Emperor Takakura, who had once visited the Itsukushima Shrine in Aki Province.[426] At Toba I boarded a boat that took me to the mouth of the Yodo River, where I transferred to an oceangoing vessel. But it proved to be lonely at sea and, when I thought of the courtier Yukihira, I wanted to ask the breeze "blowing through the mountain pass" the location of the house where Yukihira had "lived alone with tears and dripping seaweed."[427]

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426. After Takakura visited Itsukushima, a Shinto shrine on the Inland Sea near present-day Hiroshima, in 1180, Lady Nijō's grandfather Koga no Michichika wrote an account of the journey.

427. Lady Nijō alludes to two poems by Yukihira, who was once exiled to Suma Bay: *Shokukokinshū*, no. 876: "A sea breeze from Suma Bay blowing through the traveler's sleeves," and *Kokinshū*, no. 962: "Should by chance, someone inquire, say I live alone on Suma Shore with tears and dripping seaweed."

เนื้อหาคุ้มครองลิขสิทธิ์

The ship anchored near shore each night. It was early in the Ninth Month, and the weakening cries of insects from clumps of grasses already withered by the frost were barely audible, but the "voices of a thousand—no, ten thousand mallets"[428] carried through the cold night the news that villagers were beating cloth. I listened to the waves lapping beneath my pillow and felt the full force of autumn's melancholy. Acutely aware that my destination really made very little difference, I saw myself as "the boat vanishing behind an island in the morning mist."[429] I understood Genji's feelings when he begged his roan to carry him back to the capital.[430]

Our journey continued until we arrived at a place in Bingo Province called Tomo. On the small island of Taika, not far offshore from the bustling mainland port of Tomoko, there was a row of small huts belonging to women who had fled from lives in prostitution. Born into households whose business meant they were fated to be constantly reborn into the six realms, they had been mired deep in the toils of illusion. They would perfume their gowns in hopes of alluring men, and comb their dark hair, wondering on whose pillows it would become disheveled. When night fell they would await lovers, and when day broke, grieve over the separation. I admired them for having renounced that way of life and come here to live in seclusion.

When asked about their religious practices and the reasons behind their conversions, one of the nuns said, "I am the leader of the women on this island. Formerly I made my livelihood by assembling girls and selling their charms. We would attempt to lure travelers, rejoicing if they stopped, disconsolate if they rowed by. We would vow eternal love to complete strangers and encourage drunkenness beneath the blossoms. I was over fifty when some karmic effect suddenly enabled me to shake off the sleep of illusions, give up my old life, and come to the island, where each morning, I climb to the mountain and gather flowers to offer to the buddhas of the past, present, and future." Her words filled me with longing.

GoFukakusa falls mortally ill, and through the offices of Sanekane (Akebono), a former lover, Nijō is able to catch a glimpse of the retired emperor before he dies.

. . . On the night of the fifteenth, thanks to Sanekane's help, I entered Go-Fukakusa's palace from Second Avenue, and caught a dreamlike glimpse of His Majesty. Around noon on the sixteenth His Majesty's passing was announced, and although I had tried to prepare myself for this event, when it actually

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428. In both Chinese and Japanese literature, the sound of beating cloth is normally associated with sorrow. This line is from a couplet by Bo Juyi.

429. *Kokinshū*, no. 409: "Into the mist, glowing with dawn, across the Bay of Akashi a boat carries my thoughts into hiding, islands beyond."

430. When Genji was in exile at Suma, he listened to the waves lapping by his pillow, and when he moved to Akashi, he begged his horse to carry him home.

เนื้อหาคุ้มครองลิขสิทธิ์

happened I could not suppress my sorrow or assuage my loneliness and grief. I returned to the palace and saw attendants dismantling the altars where prayers for his recovery had been offered. Others seemed to be milling aimlessly about, yet it was deathly still, and all the lights in the palace had been extinguished. Before dusk the crown prince retired to the palace on Second Avenue, and gradually other people also disappeared. Early that evening the two Rokuhara deputies came to pay their final respects. Together they arranged for a most impressive tribute: the deputy of the north ordered that torches be placed in front of the houses facing Tomi Street, and the deputy of the south had two lines of retainers sit on stools in front of watch fires along Kyōgoku Street.

Even when it grew late I could not bring myself to return home, and lingered alone in the empty courtyard, summoning up memories of the now distant past. As images of His Majesty floated before my eyes I felt pangs of grief impossible for words to describe. Before my eyes the bright moon slowly ascended the clear night sky.

> Tonight even the bright moon seems a cruel mockery!
> How happy I would be if it dimmed and clouded over.

When the Buddha died long ago the light of both the sun and moon was dimmed, and birds and beasts, though mindless, mourned for him. Now surely the moon shining so intensely in the sky seemed cruel indeed, as if it refused to comprehend the depth of my sorrow.

At dawn I returned home nervous and restless. I learned that a relative of the Taira Middle Counselor was to be in charge of the funeral arrangements, and I called on a court lady of my acquaintance who was related to him. "Please help me see His Majesty once more, even if it is only a distant view of the casket," I begged. She replied that my request was impossible.

There seemed no other recourse, yet I was determined to find an opportunity to approach the casket. I put a court lady's gown over my head and loitered around the palace all day to no avail until finally, when it was time for the large outside shutters to be let down for the night, I was able to slip quietly around some bamboo blinds and approach the room where I thought the casket lay. A light was burning. The thought that the casket was there made me feel dazed and giddy. Then an announcement was made that it was time for the funeral to begin, and a carriage was drawn up for the casket to be borne onto it, whereupon it was wheeled to the door of Retired Emperor Fushimi's quarters. When it was pulled away again, the sleeves of Emperor Fushimi's robes, which had obviously been used to wipe away his tears, attested to the extent of his grief.

I left the palace and went out onto Kyōgoku Street to follow after the procession. All day long I had been inside, and when the carriage had arrived for the casket I was in such a state of confusion that I could not remember where I had left my shoes. Now I found myself running behind the carriage barefoot. At the corner of Kyōgoku Street and Fifth Avenue, where the procession turned west,

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KENKŌ

Kenkō (ca. 1283–ca. 1352) is thought to have been born in the Kōan era (1278–1288), in the late Kamakura period (1185–1333), and died in the Northern and Southern Courts period (1336–1392). Kenkō came from the Urabe, a noted Shinto family, but he did not enter the Shinto profession. Instead, during his teens, he served Emperor GoNijō (r. 1301–1308) as a sixth-rank *kurōdo* (chamberlain), in turn as an archivist or a secretary in charge of sundry affairs. In 1313, at around the age of thirty, Kenkō took the tonsure. He traveled a number of times to the east, to the Kantō area, and in 1319 his poetry was included in the *Zoku senzaishū*, a semi-imperial anthology. Kenkō became a poet of the Nijō school and was referred to as one of the "four kings of waka," of whom the most notable was Ton'a (1289–1372). But in his treatise *Comments on Recent Poetic Styles* (*Kinrai fūteishō*, 1387), the noted scholar-poet Nijō Yoshimoto (1320–1388) disparagingly refers to Kenkō as below the other "four kings" in quality. In addition to *Essays in Idleness* (*Tsurezuregusa*), he left behind a collection of his own poetry, *Collection of Priest Kenkō* (*Kenkō hōshi shū*, ca. 1343). In the latter part of his life, Kenkō was closely affiliated with the Ashikaga house, which was in power, and interacted with waka poets, intellectuals, warriors, and nobility. In other words, Kenkō both lived in seclusion and continued to mingle with the most powerful figures of the time, including cultural luminaries like Nijō Yoshimoto, one of the founders of classical renga.

ESSAYS IN IDLENESS
(*TSUREZUREGUSA*, 1329–1333)

Essays in Idleness now consists of a preface and 243 sections (*dan*). The shortest section is only one sentence long, and the longest one—"Are We to Look at Cherry Blossoms Only in Full Bloom?"—is about four pages. (These sections were created in the Tokugawa period, to make the text easier to read.) On the eve of the Northern and Southern Courts period, Kenkō, an intellectual who was neither completely secular nor completely a priest, casts a sharp eye on a chaotic, *Taiheiki* type of world. In 1331, when Kenkō probably wrote the bulk of *Tsurezuregusa*, Emperor GoDaigo's second plan to overthrow the bakufu was discovered, and the Kasagi and Akasaka castles fell. The period of the *Taiheiki* was a time when friend and foe, outsider and insider, establishment and nonestablishment, war and peace, were constantly changing and replacing each other.

Of the more than two hundred sections, about half directly reveal Kenkō's views of life and the world, which were based on a strong sense of impermanence and impending death. A good example of this type is "Gathering Like Ants" (sec. 74) as well as sections 41, 49, 59, 75, and 241, all of which are included here. Another third of the sections, which have the character of anecdotes, describe people from all walks

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of life who have caught Kenkō's attention. These sections also provide information about court or warrior rules and precedents.

It is not clear when *Tsurezuregusa* was composed. Today the dominant view is that Kenkō wrote most of the text in two or three years during the Gentoku era (1329–1331), when he was in his late forties. Scholars, however, point to significant differences in vocabulary, style, and content between the first and second parts, and many believe that *Tsurezuregusa* was written over a longer period of time. They believe that the first part, what might be called the original *Tsurezuregusa*, from section 1 through about section 30, was probably written as early as the Bunpō era (1317–1319), when Kenkō was young, immediately after he had left court life. This part reveals a strong yearning for Heian aristocratic culture, uses Heian aesthetic terms such as *aware* (moving) and *wokashi* (charming), and expresses great admiration for *The Tale of Genji* as well as *The Pillow Book*. In section 19, "Changing of the Seasons," for example, Kenkō describes the beauties of the four seasons as they are embodied in Heian literature and poetry.

The second part of *Tsurezuregusa*, the main body, sections 31 through 240, was probably written later, in 1330/1331, during the Gentoku era. Some sections may also have been added after the Kenmu restoration in 1333. This second part makes more use of Sino-Japanese (*kanbun kundoku*) expressions, shows the influence of Daoism, advocates renunciation and reclusion, and confronts life and death. In contrast to the first part of *Tsurezuregusa*—in which Kenkō draws on his rich knowledge of Chinese classics, Japanese poetry, and Heian classical texts and discusses classical topics such as love and friendship—in the second part Kenkō gradually breaks away from classical aesthetics and includes more medieval anecdotes, focusing on eccentric, highly individualized characters, as in "About a Priest at Ninna Temple" (sec. 53) and "A Man Famous as a Tree Climber" (sec. 109).

The inherent contradictions of *Tsurezuregusa* reflect the changes in Kenkō's perspective between his youth and his middle years, as well as the larger tensions of the period, particularly between the court culture and the culture in the east (with its distinctive setsuwa and folk songs). Because Kenkō traveled frequently between Kyoto and Kamakura, he was exposed to both the imperial court culture of Kyoto and the new warrior culture. Despite his interest in the new eastern culture, Kenkō's general preference was for the refined culture of the capital, as evident in the famous section 137: "Are We to Look at Cherry Blossoms Only in Full Bloom?"

Today *Tsurezuregusa* is generally referred to as a *zuihitsu* (miscellany) and is regarded as part of a literary lineage starting with *The Pillow Book* and extending through *An Account of a Ten-Foot-Square Hut* (*Hōjōki*). Indeed, *Tsurezuregusa* bears certain similarities to *The Pillow Book* in that it reveals the author's opinions and musings on a wide range of subjects, expressed in very short and independent passages. In contrast to *Hōjōki*, which is a unified essay on the theme of reclusion and salvation, however, *Tsurezuregusa* has no central theme or order. *Tsurezuregusa* can also be read as one of the last setsuwa collections, resembling such Buddhist collections as Mujū Ichien's

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Collection of Sand and Pebbles (*Shasekishū*, 1279–1283) and *Collection of Sundry Conversations* (*Zōtanshū*, 1305), which is considered to be one of the last medieval setsuwa collections.

Tsurezuregusa consists of roughly three different worlds: the secular world in which most people live, the world of the Buddhist priesthood, and the world of the recluse (*tonseisha*). Although Kenkō apparently took vows, he did not belong to any particular sect or school, nor was he a lay person who lived in regular society. Instead, he moved freely among these three worlds, particularly enjoying that of the recluse. The term *tsurezure*, which means "idleness," was usually used negatively. But in section 75, "A Person Who Complains of Having Nothing to Do," Kenkō praises this condition as an ideal, since it allows solitude, avoids entanglements, and brings peace to the heart—ideals of the recluse. In contrast to the *hijiri* (holy man), as exemplified by someone like Priest Zōga and other Buddhist heroes, tonseisha, though wanting to separate themselves from the preoccupations of the secular world, cannot tolerate the kinds of hardships endured by these holy men, nor do they have their deep faith. Furthermore, tonseisha like Kenkō regarded reclusion as a means of devoting themselves to learning and the arts. Unlike Kamo no Chōmei in *Hōjōki*, Kenkō has little interest in being reborn in the Pure Land; rather, he is interested in this life, in the present. His intense awareness of impermanence turns his attention not to the next world but to this world, in an effort to make memorable every minute in this life.

Preface

What a strange, demented feeling it gives me when I realize I have spent whole days before this inkstone, with nothing better to do, jotting down at random whatever nonsensical thoughts have entered my head.

If One Is Born in This World (1)

It is enough, it would seem, to have been born into this world for a man to desire many things. The position of the emperor, of course, is far too exalted for our aspirations. Even the remote descendants of the imperial line are sacred, for they are not of the seed of man. Ordinary nobles of a rank that entitles them to retainers—let alone those who stand in the solitary grandeur of the chancellor—appear most impressive, and even their children and grandchildren, though their fortunes may decline, still possess a distinctive elegance. Persons of lower rank, fortunate enough to achieve some success in keeping with their station, are apt to wear looks of self-satisfaction and no doubt consider themselves most important, but actually they are quite insignificant.

No one is less to be envied than a priest. Sei Shōnagon wrote of priests that they seemed to outsiders "like sticks of wood," an apt description. The clerics impress nobody, even when they flaunt their authority and their importance is

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loudly proclaimed. It is easy to see why the holy man Zōga[435] should have said that worldly fame is unseemly in priests, and that those who seek it violate the teachings of Buddha. A true hermit might, in fact, seem more admirable.

It is desirable that a man's face and figure be of excelling beauty. I could sit forever with a man, provided that what he said did not grate on my ears, that he had charm, and that he did not talk very much. What an unpleasant experience it is when someone you have supposed to be quite distinguished reveals his true, inferior nature. A man's social position and looks are likely to be determined at birth, but why should not a man's mind go from wisdom to greater wisdom if it is so disposed? What a shame it is when men of excellent appearance and character prove hopelessly inept in social encounters with their inferiors in both position and appearance, solely because they are badly educated.

A familiarity with orthodox scholarship,[436] the ability to compose poetry and prose in Chinese, a knowledge of Japanese poetry and music are all desirable, and if a man can serve as a model to others in matters of precedent and court ceremony, he is truly impressive. The mark of an excellent man is that he writes easily in an acceptable hand, sings agreeably and in tune, and, though appearing reluctant to accept when wine is pressed on him, is not a teetotaler.

If the Dews of Adashino Never Faded (7)

If man were never to fade away like the dews of Adashino,[437] never to vanish like the smoke over Toribeyama,[438] but lingered on forever in the world, how things would lose their power to move us![439] The most precious thing in life is its uncertainty. Consider living creatures—none lives so long as man. The mayfly waits not for the evening, the summer cicada knows neither spring nor autumn. What a wonderfully unhurried feeling it is to live even a single year in perfect serenity! If that is not enough for you, you might live a thousand years and still feel it was but a single night's dream. We cannot live forever in this world; why should we wait for ugliness to overtake us? The longer man lives, the more shame he endures. To die, at the latest, before one reaches forty,

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435. Zōga (917–1003), a high-ranking priest of the Tendai sect, spent his last years in a lonely retreat. See "The Venerable Zōga" chapter in the *Senjūshō* (*Tales of Renunciation*).

436. Scholarship in the Confucian sense: learning useful in governing a country or of intrinsic moral value.

437. Adashino was a crematorium in the northwest of the capital. The word *adashi* (impermanent), contained in the place-name, accounted for the frequent use of Adashino in poetry as a symbol of impermanence. The dew also is often used with that meaning.

438. Toribeyama was also another major crematorium in the capital.

439. *Mono no aware* (literally, "the pathos of things") is here translated as the "power [of things] to move us."

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how that even moonlight, when it shines into the quiet domicile of a person of taste, is more affecting than elsewhere. A house, though it may not be in the current fashion or elaborately decorated, will appeal to us by its unassuming beauty—a grove of trees with an indefinably ancient look; a garden where plants, growing of their own accord, have a special charm; a verandah and an open-work wooden fence of interesting construction; and a few personal effects left carelessly lying about, giving the place an air of having been lived in. A house which multitudes of workmen have polished with every care, where strange and rare Chinese and Japanese furnishings are displayed, and even the grasses and trees of the garden have been trained unnaturally, is ugly to look at and most depressing. How could anyone live for long in such a place? The most casual glance will suggest how likely such a house is to turn in a moment to smoke.

A man's character, as a rule, may be known from the place where he lives. The Gotokudaiji minister[441] stretched a rope across his roof to keep the kites from roosting. Saigyō,[442] seeing the rope, asked, "Why should it bother him if kites perch there? That shows you the kind of man this prince is." I have heard that Saigyō never visited him again. I remembered this story not long ago when I noticed a rope stretched over the roof of the Kosaka palace,[443] where Prince Ayanokōji[444] lives. Someone told me that, as a matter of fact, it distressed the prince to see how crows clustering on the roof would swoop down to seize frogs in the pond. The story impressed me, and made me wonder if Sanesada may not also have had some such reason.

In the Tenth Month, Passing a Place Called Kurusuno (11)

About the tenth month I had the occasion to visit a village beyond the place called Kurusuno.[445] I made my way far down a moss-covered path until I reached a lonely-looking hut. Not a sound could be heard, except for the dripping of a water pipe buried in fallen leaves. Sprays of chrysanthemum and red maple leaves had been carelessly arranged on the holy-water shelf. Evidently somebody was living here. Moved, I was thinking, "One can live even in such a place," when I noticed in the garden beyond a great tangerine tree, its branches bent with fruit, that had been enclosed by a forbidding fence. Rather disillusioned, I thought now, "If only the tree had not been there!"

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441. Fujiwara no Sanesada (1139–1191), a poet.

442. Saigyō (1118–1190), a noted waka poet.

443. Another name for the Tendai temple Myōhō-in.

444. The prince was a son of Emperor Kameyama (1249–1305) and was also known by his Buddhist name, Shōe.

445. A village east of the capital.

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Alone Before a Lamplight (13)

The pleasantest of all diversions is to sit alone under the lamp, a book spread out before you, and to make friends with people of a distant past you have never known. The books I would choose are the moving volumes of *Wen xuan*,[446] the collected works of Bo Juyi, the sayings of Laozi, and the chapters of *Zhuangzi*. Among works by scholars of this country, those written long ago are often quite interesting.

Changing of the Seasons (19)

The changing of the seasons is deeply moving in its every manifestation. People seem to agree that autumn is the best season to appreciate the beauty of things. That may well be true, but the sights of spring are even more exhilarating. The cries of the birds gradually take on a peculiarly spring-like quality, and in the gentle sunlight the bushes begin to sprout along the fences. Then, as spring deepens, mists spread over the landscape and the cherry blossoms seem ready to open, only for steady rains and winds to cause them to scatter precipitously. The heart is subject to incessant pangs of emotion as the young leaves are growing out.

Orange blossoms are famous for evoking memories,[447] but the fragrance of plum blossoms above all makes us return to the past and remember nostalgically long-ago events. Nor can we overlook the clean loveliness of the *yamabuki*[448] or the uncertain beauty of wisteria, and so many other compelling sights.

Someone once remarked, "In summer, when the Feast of Anointing the Buddha[449] and the Kamo Festival come around, and the young leaves on the treetops grow thick and cool, our sensitivity to the touching beauty of the world and our longing for absent friends grow stronger." Indeed, this is so. When, in the Fifth Month, the irises bloom and the rice seedlings are transplanted, can anyone remain untroubled by the drumming of the water rails? Then, in the Sixth Month, you can see the whiteness of moonflowers glowing over wretched hovels, and the smoldering of mosquito incense is affecting too. The purification rites of the Sixth Month[450] are also engrossing.

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446. J. *Monzen*, a noted collection of Chinese poetry and prose.

447. According to the Japanese poetic tradition, the scent of orange blossoms (*tachibana*) was believed to bring back old memories.

448. Sometimes translated as kerria roses, a yellow flower.

449. On the eighth day of the Fourth Month, the birthday of Shakyamuni, his statues were anointed with perfumed water. The Kamo Festival was held in the middle of the Fourth Month. Both were summer events because, in the lunar calendar, summer began with the Fourth Month.

450. On the last day of the Sixth Month, the last day of summer, palace officials sent little floats down the Kamo River, intended to symbolize sins accumulated during the year.

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The celebration of Tanabata is charming.[451] Then, as the nights gradually become cold and the wild geese cry, the under leaves of the *hagi*[452] turn yellow, and men harvest and dry the first crop of rice. So many moving sights come together, in autumn especially. And how unforgettable is the morning after an equinoctial storm!—As I go on I realize that these sights have long since been enumerated in *The Tale of Genji* and *The Pillow Book*, but I make no pretense of trying to avoid saying the same things again. If I fail to say what lies on my mind it gives me a feeling of flatulence; I shall therefore give my brush free rein. Mine is a foolish diversion, but these pages are meant to be torn up, and no one is likely to see them.

To return to the subject. Winter decay is hardly less beautiful than autumn. Crimson leaves lie scattered on the grass beside the ponds, and how delightful it is on a morning when the frost is very white to see the vapor rise from a garden stream. At the end of the year it is indescribably moving to see everyone hurrying about on errands. There is something forlorn about the waning winter moon, shining cold and clear in the sky, unwatched because it is said to be depressing. The Invocation of the Buddha Names and the departure of the messengers with the imperial offerings[453] are moving and inspiring. How impressive it is that so many palace ceremonials are performed besides all the preparations for the New Year! It is striking that the Worship of the Four Directions follows directly on the Expulsion of the Demons.[454]

On the last night of the year, when it is extremely dark, people light pine torches and go rushing about, pounding on the gates of strangers until well after midnight. I wonder what it signifies. After they have done with their exaggerated shouting and running so furiously that their feet hardly touch the ground, the noise at last fades away with the coming of the dawn, leaving a lonely feeling of regret over the departing old year. The custom of paying homage to the dead,[455] in the belief that they return that night, has lately disappeared from the capital, but I was deeply moved to discover that it was still performed

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451. Tanabata, a feast celebrated on the seventh night of the Seventh Month, commemorated the annual meeting of two stars.

452. Bush clover. The lavender or white flower is traditionally associated with the autumn rains. The turning of the colors of its underleaves is often mentioned in poetry as a sign of approaching winter.

453. For three days, beginning on the nineteenth day of the Twelfth Month, rites were performed at the Seiryōden to purify the sins of the six senses. The names of the Buddhas of the Three Worlds were invoked. Messengers were sent from the provinces in the middle of the Twelfth Month with offerings of the harvest for the imperial tombs.

454. The Expulsion of the Demons (Tsuina) took place on the last day of the year. The next morning, the emperor worshiped the Four Directions and the imperial tombs and prayed for a safe and prosperous year.

455. The last night of the year was one of six times during the year when the dead were believed to return. The Bon Festival preserves that belief today.

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positions and end their days without ever having encountered good fortune. A feverish craving for high rank and position is second in foolishness only to seeking wealth.

One would like to leave behind a glorious reputation for surpassing wisdom and character, but careful reflection will show that what we mean by love of a glorious reputation is delight in the approbation of others. Neither those who praise nor those who abuse last for long, and the people who have heard their reports are likely to depart the world as quickly. Before whom then should we feel ashamed? By whom should we wish to be appreciated? Fame, moreover, inspires backbiting. It does no good whatsoever to have one's name survive. A craving after fame is next most foolish.

If I were to address myself to those who nevertheless seek desperately to attain knowledge and wisdom, I would say that knowledge leads to deceit, and artistic talent is the product of much suffering. True knowledge is not what one hears from others or acquires through study. What, then, are we to call knowledge? Proper and improper come to one and the same thing—can we call anything "good"?[469] The truly enlightened man has no learning, no virtue, no accomplishments, no fame.[470] Who knows of him, who will report his glory? It is not that he conceals his virtue or pretends to be stupid; it is because from the outset he is above distinctions between wise and foolish, between profit and loss.

If, in your delusion, you seek fame and profit, the results will be as I have described. All is unreality. Nothing is worth discussing, worth desiring.

A Horse Race at Kamo (41)

On the fifth day of the Fifth Month I went to see the horse race at the Kamo Shrine.[471] There was such a mob before our carriage, between us and the view, that we could see nothing. We all got out of the carriage and pushed toward the railing, but the crowd was particularly dense in that area, and there seemed no chance of making our way to the fore. Just then we noticed a priest perched in the crotch of an *ōchi*[472] tree across the way, watching the race. Even as he clung to the tree he was nodding drowsily, again and again waking himself just as he seemed about to fall.

People, observing the priest, laughed at his folly. "What an idiot! Imagine anyone being able to sleep so peacefully when he's sitting on such a dangerous

469. The expression is from Zhuangzi, a Daoist philosopher, whose works were widely read by Zen monks of Kenkō's time.

470. This sentence, too, is from Zhuangzi.

471. A feature of the Kamo Festival is the horse race from the first to the second *torii* of the Upper Kamo Shrine.

472. The azedarach, also called a bead tree.

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A House Should Be Built for Summer (55)

A house should be built with the summer in mind. In winter it is possible to live anywhere, but a badly made house is unbearable when it gets hot.

There is nothing cool-looking about deep water; a shallow, flowing stream is far cooler. When you are reading fine print you will find that a room with sliding doors is lighter than one with hinged shutters. A room with a high ceiling is cold in winter and dark by lamplight. People agree that a house which has plenty of spare room is attractive to look at and may be put to many different uses.

Determined to Take the Great Step (59)

A man who has determined to take the Great Step should leave unresolved all plans for disposing of urgent or worrisome business.

Some men think, "I'll wait a bit longer, until I take care of this matter," or "I might as well dispose of that business first," or "People will surely laugh at me if I leave such and such as it stands. I'll arrange things now so that there won't be any future criticism," or "I've managed to survive all these years. I'll wait till that matter is cleared up. It won't take long. I mustn't be hasty." But if you think in such terms the day for taking the Great Step will never come, for you will keep discovering more and more unavoidable problems, and there will never be a time when you run out of unfinished business.

My observation of people leads me to conclude, generally speaking, that even people with some degree of intelligence are likely to go through life supposing they have ample time before them. But would a man fleeing because a fire has broken out in his neighborhood say to the fire, "Wait a moment, please!"? To save his life, a man will run away, indifferent to shame, abandoning his possessions. Is a man's life any more likely to wait for him? Death attacks faster than fire or water, and is harder to escape. When its hour comes, can you refuse to give up your aged parents, your little children, your duty to your master, your affections for others, because they are hard to abandon?

Gathering Like Ants (74)

They flock together like ants, hurry east and west, run north and south. Some are mighty, some humble. Some are aged, some young. They have places to go, houses to return to. At night they sleep, in the morning get up. But what does all this activity mean? There is no ending to their greed for long life, their grasping for profit. What expectations have they that they take such good care of themselves? All that awaits them in the end is old age and death, whose coming is swift and does not falter for one instant. What joy can there be while waiting for this end? The man who is deluded by fame and profit does not fear

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the approach of old age and death because he is so intoxicated by worldly cravings that he never stops to consider how near he is to his destination. The foolish man, for his part, grieves because he desires everlasting life and is ignorant of the law of universal change.

A Person Who Complains of Having Nothing to Do (75)

I wonder what feelings inspire a man to complain of "having nothing to do." I am happiest when I have nothing to distract me and I am completely alone.

If a man conforms to society, his mind will be captured by the filth of the outside world, and he is easily led astray; if he mingles in society, he must be careful that his words do not offend others, and what he says will not at all be what he feels in his heart. He will joke with others only to quarrel with them, now resentful, now happy, his feelings in constant turmoil. Calculations of advantage will wantonly intrude, and not a moment will be free from considerations of profit and loss. Intoxication is added to delusion, and in a state of inebriation the man dreams. People are all alike: they spend their days running about frantically, oblivious to their insanity.

Even if a man has not yet discovered the path of enlightenment, as long as he removes himself from his worldly ties, leads a quiet life, and maintains his peace of mind by avoiding entanglements, he may be said to be happy, at least for the time being.

It is written in *Maka shikan*,[477] "Break your ties with your daily activities, with personal affairs, with your arts, and with learning."

Scroll Wrapping of Thin Silk (82)

Somebody once remarked that thin silk was not satisfactory as a scroll wrapping because it was so easily torn. Ton'a[478] replied, "It is only after the silk wrapper has frayed at top and bottom, and the mother-of-pearl has fallen from the roller that a scroll looks beautiful." This opinion demonstrated the excellent taste of the man. People often say that a set of books looks ugly if all volumes are not in the same format, but I was impressed to hear the Abbot Kōyū[479] say, "It is typical of the unintelligent man to insist on assembling complete sets of everything. Imperfect sets are better."

In everything, no matter what it may be, uniformity is undesirable. Leaving something incomplete makes it interesting, and gives one the feeling that there

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477. *Calm and Contemplation*, a basic text of Tendai Buddhism, compiled by Guanding (561–632), a disciple of Zhiyi (538–597), from his master's lectures.

478. Ton'a (1289–1372) was a distinguished poet, closely associated with Kenkō, as well as a monk of the Jishū sect of Jōdo.

479. Kōyū Sōzu was a contemporary of Kenkō, but little is known about him.

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is room for growth. Someone once told me, "Even when building the imperial palace, they always leave one place unfinished." In both Buddhist and Confucian writings of the philosophers of former times, there are also many missing chapters.

A Beast Called *Nekomata* (89)

Someone remarked, "In the mountains there is a man-eating beast called the *nekomata*."[480] Another man said, "They're not only found in the mountains. Even in this neighborhood cats have grown into *nekomata*, with time and experience, and some have been known to eat people." A priest named Amidabutsu,[481] a linked-verse poet who lived near the Gyōgan Temple,[482] heard this story and decided that he would have to be more careful henceforth when he traveled alone. Not long afterward he was returning home alone after having spent much of the night composing linked verse at a certain place. He had reached the bank of a stream, when suddenly a *nekomata*, looking exactly as it had been described, bounded up to his feet. It leaped on the priest and tried to bite his throat. The priest was so terrified that he had not the strength to defend himself. His legs gave way and he tumbled into the river, crying, "Help! A *nekomata*! A *nekomata*'s after me!" People came running out from nearby houses with lighted torches and found the priest, a well-known figure in the neighborhood. "What happened?" they cried. When they lifted him from the river they discovered he had fallen in with the fan and little boxes won as prizes for his linked verse clutched to his bosom. Looking as if only a miracle had saved him, he crawled back into his house. Apparently his dog, recognizing its master in the dark, had jumped on him.

Learning to Shoot a Bow (92)

A certain man who was learning to shoot a bow aimed at the target with two arrows in his hand. His teacher said, "A beginner should not hold two arrows. It will make him rely on the second arrow and be careless with the first. Each time you shoot you should think not of hitting or missing the target but of making this one the decisive arrow." I wonder if anyone with only two arrows would be careless with one of them in the presence of his teacher. But though the pupil is himself unaware of any carelessness, the teacher will notice it. This caution applies to all things.

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480. A fabulous beast, said to have eyes like a cat and the body of a dog.

481. Literally, Something Amidabutsu. Priests at the time, particularly those belonging to the Jishū (Time sect) branch of the Jōdo school, often took names ending in *amidabutsu*, or *ami*, for short.

482. A Tendai temple in the center of Kyoto.

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"This branch and that branch have lost their blossoms. There is nothing worth seeing now."

In all things, it is the beginnings and ends that are interesting. Does the love between men and women refer only to the moments when they are in each other's arms? The man who grieves over a love affair broken off before it was fulfilled, who bewails empty vows, who spends long autumn nights alone, who lets his thoughts wander to distant skies, who yearns for the past in a dilapidated house—such a man truly knows what love means.

The moon that appears close to dawn after we have long waited for it moves us more profoundly than the full moon shining cloudless over a thousand leagues. And how incomparably lovely is the moon, almost greenish in its light, when seen through the tops of the cedars deep in the mountains, or when it hides for a moment behind clustering clouds during a sudden shower! The sparkle on hickory or white-oak leaves seemingly wet with moonlight strikes one to the heart. One suddenly misses the capital, longing for a friend who could share the moment.

And are we to look at the moon and the cherry blossoms with our eyes alone? How much more evocative and pleasing it is to think about the spring without stirring from the house, to dream of the moonlit night though we remain in our room!

The man of breeding never appears to abandon himself completely to his pleasures; even his manner of enjoyment is detached. It is the rustic boors who take all their pleasures grossly. They squirm their way through the crowd to get under the trees; they stare at the blossoms with eyes for nothing else; they drink saké and compose linked verse; and finally they heartlessly break off great branches and cart them away. When they see a spring they dip their hands and feet to cool them; if it is the snow, they jump down to leave their footprints. No matter what the sight, they are never content merely with looking at it.

Such people have a very peculiar manner of watching the Kamo Festival. "The procession's awfully late," they say. "There's no point waiting in the stands for it to come." They go off then to a shack behind the stands where they drink and eat, play go or backgammon, leaving somebody in the stands to warn them. When he cries, "It's passing now!" each of them dashes out in wild consternation, struggling to be first back into the stands. They all but fall from their perches as they push out the blinds and press against one another for a better look, staring at the scene, determined not to miss a thing. They comment on everything that goes by, with cries of "Look at this! Look at that!" When the procession has passed, they scramble down, saying, "We'll be back for the next one." All they are interested in is what they can see.

People from the capital, the better sort, doze during the processions, hardly looking at all. Young underlings are constantly moving about, performing their masters' errands, and persons in attendance, seated behind, never stretch forward in an unseemly manner. No one is intent on seeing the procession at all costs.

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It is charming on the day of the festival to see garlands of hollyhock leaves carelessly strewn over everything. The morning of the festival, before dawn breaks, you wonder who the owners are of the carriages silently drawn up in place, and guess, "That one is his—or his," and have your guesses confirmed when sometimes you recognize a coachman or servant. I never weary of watching the different carriages going back and forth, some delightfully unpretentious, others magnificent. By the time it is growing dark you wonder where the rows of carriages and the dense crowds of spectators have disappeared to. Before you know it, hardly a soul is left, and the congestion of returning carriages is over. Then they start removing the blinds and matting from the stands, and the place, even as you watch, begins to look desolate. You realize with a pang of grief that life is like this. If you have seen the avenues of the city, you have seen the festival.

I suddenly realized, from the large number of people I could recognize in the crowds passing to and fro before the stands, that there were not so many people in the world, after all. Even if I were not to die until all of them had gone, I should not have long to wait. If you pierce a tiny aperture in a large vessel filled with water, even though only a small amount drips out, the constant leakage will empty the vessel. In this capital, with all its many people, surely a day never passes without someone dying. And are there merely one or two deaths a day? On some days, certainly, many more than one or two are seen to their graves at Toribeno, Funaoka, and other mountainsides, but never a day passes without a single funeral. That is why coffin makers never have any to spare. It does not matter how young or how strong you may be, the hour of death comes sooner than you expect. It is an extraordinary miracle that you should have escaped to this day; do you suppose you have even the briefest respite in which to relax?

When you make a *mamagodate*[483] with backgammon counters, at first you cannot tell which of the stones arranged before you will be taken away. Your count then falls on a certain stone and you remove it. The others seem to have escaped, but as you renew the count you will thin out the pieces one by one, until none is left. Death is like that. The soldier who goes to war, knowing how close he is to death, forgets his family and even forgets himself; the man who has turned his back on the world and lives in a thatched hut, quietly taking pleasure in the streams and rocks of his garden, may suppose that death in battle has nothing to do with him, but this is a shallow misconception. Does

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483. A kind of mathematical puzzle. Fifteen white and fifteen black stones are so arranged that eliminating the tenth stone, counting in one direction, will result after fourteen rounds in only one white stone remaining. If the count is then resumed in the opposite direction, all the black stones will be eliminated, leaving the one white stone. The Japanese name *mamagodate* (stepchild disposition) derives from the story of a man with fifteen children by one wife and fifteen by another; his estate was disposed of by means of the game, one stepchild in the end inheriting all.

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nun herself took a small knife and cut around the broken places in the paper *shōji*, repairing them with new paper. Her brother Yoshikage, the vice-governor of Akita Castle,[486] who was there preparing the reception for that day, said, "Let me do it. I'll have a servant of mine repair the *shōji*. He knows all about such things." She replied, "I'm sure your servant's work wouldn't be any better than mine." She went on papering the *shōji*, one pane at a time. Yoshikage, pursuing the matter, said, "It would be far easier to re-paper the whole *shōji* at one time. Besides, don't you think it looks patchy and ugly this way?" "I intend to re-paper the whole thing after his visit, but I've purposely chosen to do it this way, just for today. I would like to have the young man notice this and realize that it is possible to go on using things by repairing just the broken parts." This was a most impressive gesture.

The art of governing a country is founded on thrift. The nun, though a woman, acted in keeping with the spirit of the sages. Truly, she was no ordinary woman, for she had as her son a man who preserved the order of the state.

A Certain Man, Deciding to Make His Son a Priest (188)

A certain man, deciding to make his son a priest, said, "You will study and learn the principle of Cause and Effect, and you will then preach sermons to earn a livelihood." The son, doing as instructed, learned how to ride a horse as a first step toward becoming a preacher. He thought that when people wanted him to conduct a service they would probably send a horse for him, since he owned neither a palanquin nor a carriage, and it would be embarrassing if, because of his awkwardness in the saddle, he fell from the horse. Next, thinking that if, after the service, he were offered some saké and had no social graces to display, the donor would be disappointed, he learned to sing popular songs. When he was at last able to pass muster in these two arts, he felt anxious to attain real proficiency. He devoted himself so diligently to his practice that he had no time to learn preaching, and in the meantime he had grown old.

This priest was not the only one; the story is typical of people in general. When they are young they are concerned about the projects they foresee lying ahead of them in the distant future—establishing themselves in different professions and carrying out some great undertaking, mastering an art, acquiring learning—but they think of their lives as stretching out indefinitely, and idly allow themselves to be constantly distracted by things directly before their eyes. They pass months and days in this manner, succeeding in none of their plans, and so they grow old. In the end, they neither become proficient in their profession, nor do they gain the eminence they anticipated. However they regret it, they cannot roll back the years, but decline more and more rapidly, like a wheel rolling downhill.

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486. Adachi no Yoshikage was appointed vice-governor of Akita Castle in 1218.

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In view of the above, we must carefully compare in our minds all the different things in life we might hope to make our principal work, and decide which is of the greatest value; this decided, we should renounce our other interests and devote ourselves to that one thing only. Many projects present themselves in the course of a day or even an hour; we must perform those that offer even slightly greater advantages, renouncing the others and giving ourselves entirely to whatever is most important. If we remain attached to them all, and are reluctant to give up any, we will not accomplish a single thing.

It is like a go player who, not wasting a move, gets the jump on his opponent by sacrificing a small advantage to achieve a great one. It is easy, of course, to sacrifice three stones in order to gain ten. The hard thing is to sacrifice ten stones in order to gain eleven. A man should be ready to choose the course which is superior even by one stone, but when it comes to sacrificing ten, he feels reluctant, and it is hard to make an exchange which will not yield many additional stones. If we hesitate to give up what we have, and at the same time are eager to grab what the other man holds, we shall certainly fail to get his pieces and lose our own.

A man living in the capital has urgent business in the Eastern Hills, and has already reached the house of his destination when it occurs to him that if he goes to the Western Hills he may reap greater advantage; in that case, he should turn back at the gate and proceed to the Western Hills. If, however, he thinks, "I've come all this way. I might as well take care of my business here first. There was no special day set for my business in the Western Hills. I'll go there some other time, after I have returned," the sloth of a moment will turn in this manner into the sloth of an entire lifetime. This is to be dreaded.

If you are determined to carry out one particular thing, you must not be upset that other things fall through. Nor should you be embarrassed by other people's laughter. A great enterprise is unlikely to be achieved except at the sacrifice of everything else.

Once, at a large gathering, a certain man said, "Some people say *masuho no susuki*, others say *masoho no susuki*.[487] The holy man of Watanabe knows the secret tradition of this pronunciation." The priest Tōren,[488] who was present at the gathering and heard this remark, said (since it was raining at the time), "Has anyone a raincoat and umbrella to lend me? I intend to call on this holy man of Watanabe and find out about the *susuki*." People said, "You shouldn't get so excited. Wait till the rain stops." The priest replied, "What a foolish thing to say! Do you suppose that a man's life will wait for the rain to clear? If I should

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487. *Susuki* is a variety of pampas grass. *Masuho no susuki* has been identified as susuki with a plume about a foot long; *masoho no susuki*, as susuki with tangled plumes; and *masuu no susuki*, as susuki with a russet tinge. The ability to make such distinctions reflected a mastery of the secrets of the art of poetry; hence, Tōren's alacrity.

488. A poet of some distinction, but no biographical information is known.

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die or the priest passes away in the meantime, could I inquire about it then?" So saying, he hurried out and went to study the tradition. This struck me as a most unusual and valid story.

It is written in the *Analects*[489] that "in speed there is success." Just as Tōren was impatient to learn about the *susuki*, we should be impatient to discover the sources of enlightenment.

Roundness of the Full Moon (241)

The full moon does not keep its roundness even a little while; it at once begins to wane. The man indifferent to such things may not see much change in the course of a single night. The worsening of an illness too does not pause in its headlong course, until the hour of death approaches. However, as long as a man's illness is not so critical that he is actually confronted by death, he grows accustomed to the idea that life will go on much the same forever, and only after he has accomplished many things in this life will he turn to quiet practice of the Way. But when a man is suddenly taken ill and faced by death, he realizes he has accomplished not one of his plans. He helplessly regrets the years and months of laziness, and resolves that if he should recover this time and live out his full life, he will unflaggingly strive days and nights on end to accomplish this or that. The sickness in the meanwhile grows steadily worse, until he loses consciousness and, in a state of violent agitation, breathes his last. This is true of the vast majority of people. Everyone should waste no time in taking this to heart.

If you imagine that once you have accomplished your ambitions you will have time to turn to the Way, you will discover that your ambitions never come to an end. In our dreamlike existence, what is there for us to accomplish? All ambitions are vain delusions. You should realize that, if desires form in your heart, false delusions are leading you astray; you should do nothing to fulfill them. Only when you abandon everything without hesitation and turn to the Way will your mind and body, unhindered and unagitated, enjoy lasting peace.

[Translated by Donald Keene]

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489. Analects 17:6: "He who is diligent succeeds in all he undertakes" (Arthur Waley, trans., *The Analects of Confucius* [London: Unwin Hyman, 1988]). Here, again, Kenkō's interpretation of the Chinese text is at variance with the present one.

เนื้อหาคุ้มครองลิขสิทธิ์

Chapter 4

THE NORTHERN AND SOUTHERN COURTS PERIOD

The late medieval period extends from the beginning of the Kenmu restoration (1333–1336) to the battle of Sekigahara in 1600, roughly 270 years that can be further subdivided into the Northern and Southern Courts (Nanboku-chō) period (1336–1392), the Muromachi period (1392–1573), and the Azuchi–Momoyama period (1573–1598).

In 1333 the Kamakura shogunate was overthrown by warrior forces that rallied to the royalist cause of Emperor GoDaigo (r. 1318–1339). GoDaigo saw the overthrow of the Kamakura shogunate as a mandate to revive what he believed to be the direct imperial rule that had existed before the rise of the Fujiwara regents in the mid-Heian period, the powerful retired emperors in the late Heian period, and the *bakufu* (military government) in the Kamakura period. The "imperial restoration," known as the Kenmu restoration, lasted for only three years, until 1336, when a struggle broke out between Nitta Yoshisada (1301–1338) and Ashikaga Takauji (1305–1358), the leaders of two branches of the Minamoto, both of whom had initially rallied to GoDaigo's cause. In 1336 Takauji defeated Yoshisada and captured Kyoto. GoDaigo fled to Yoshino, in the mountains to the south. Takauji then had a member of another branch of the imperial family named as emperor in Kyoto, making two emperors, one in the north (Kyoto) and one in the south (Yoshino), a situation that was not resolved until 1392 when the two lines were rejoined. Meanwhile, Takauji established a new shogunate, known later as the Ashikaga or Muromachi shogunate (1336–1573), with its offices in the Muromachi quarters of Kyoto.

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The sixty years of the Northern and Southern Courts was probably the bloodiest period in Japanese history. The depth of its chaos and internal conflict are vividly depicted in the *Taiheiki* (1340s–1371), a military history that bears the seemingly ironic title *Chronicle of Great Peace*. Nonetheless, despite the constant bloodshed and upheaval, a new culture emerged. A new form of poetry, *renga* (classical linked verse), led by Nijō Yoshimoto (1320–1388), became popular; historical chronicles written in the vernacular appeared; Zen priests wrote their finest kanshi (Chinese) poetry; kyōgen (comic drama) were performed; and nō theater was first established as a high art form by Kan'ami (1333–1384).

Noteworthy among the historical chronicles of the Nanboku-chō period are *The Clear Mirror* (*Masukagami*, 1338–1376), which recounts the history of the Kamakura period, especially the Jōkyū rebellion (1221), which resulted in Emperor GoToba's exile, and Kitabatake Chikafusa's *Chronicle of Gods and Sovereigns* (*Jinnō shōtōki*, 1339, 1343), which, under the influence of Ise Shinto, argues for the legitimacy of the imperial succession from the perspective of the Southern Court. But the outstanding military chronicle is the *Taiheiki*, a history of the throne and the different samurai houses involved in the turmoil of the Northern and Southern Courts period. The *Taiheiki* was recited widely, and beginning in the Muromachi period, it had a great impact on popular culture.

Until the thirteenth century, *renga* (linked verse) had been monopolized by court aristocrats, but from the end of the Kamakura period (1185–1333), it suddenly spread to samurai, temple-shrines, and commoners across the country. In response to this new market, texts like the *Tsukuba Collection* (*Tsukubashū*, 1356), an anthology of renga edited by Nijō Yoshimoto, one of the leading intellectuals and poets of the day, were compiled.

THE CLEAR MIRROR (*MASUKAGAMI*, 1338–1376)

The Clear Mirror, a historical chronicle written in the vernacular by an anonymous author, is the fourth of the "four mirrors." *Masukagami*, which literally means "Added Mirror," was "added" to the three other mirrors: *The Great Mirror* (*Ōkagami*, late eleventh century), *The Mirror of the Present* (*Imakagami*, ca. 1170), and *The Water Mirror* (*Mizukagami*, late twelfth century). Much like *Ōkagami*, the text of *Masukagami* is narrated by an elderly nun who talks about the past to a lady-in-waiting who visits a temple in Saga in the capital. Two poems in the text further reveal the meaning of *Masukagami* as a "clear mirror" reflecting the events of the past as narrated by the old woman. Picking up where *Mizukagami* left off, *Masukagami* chronicles the history of the imperial court during the Kamakura period, beginning with the birth of the future emperor GoToba (1180–1239, r. 1183–1198) and ending in 1333 with the return of Emperor GoDaigo (1288–1339, r. 1318–1339) to Kyoto from exile on Oki Island.

Volumes 1 through 4 of *Masukagami* focus on the retired emperor GoToba's political and cultural achievements and his exile to Oki as a result of the Jōkyū rebellion. Volumes 5 through 10 describe the reigns of Emperors GoSaga (r. 1242–1246),

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GoFukakusa (r. 1246–1259), and Kameyama (r. 1259–1274); their court culture; and the family of Saionji, which exerted power as the throne's maternal relatives. Volumes 11 through 17 describe Emperor GoDaigo, his failure to overthrow the bakufu, his exile to Oki, the collapse of the Kamakura bakufu, and his return to the capital.

The Clear Mirror is centered on imperial court life, particularly that of the emperor, revealing even the private affairs of Emperors GoFukakusa and Kameyama, which are described also in *The Confessions of Lady Nijō* (*Towazugatari*, 1306?). It is in fact the only medieval historical chronicle that uses *Confessions* as a historical source, and it nostalgically portrays the court as more powerful and healthier than it actually was. The court also is presented as the ultimate guardian of traditional arts, with elaborate descriptions of court ceremonies and annual observances.

The Clear Mirror borrows heavily as well from *The Tale of Genji* and late Heian historical tales, particularly *Ōkagami* (with its elderly narrator) and *A Tale of Flowering Fortunes* (*Eiga monogatari*, ca. 1092); features elegant chapter titles and court descriptions; and uses poetic expressions and waka extensively. But *The Clear Mirror* differs from the Heian monogatari in its shutting out the present. Accordingly, it has little to say about the samurai or the Kamakura bakufu, which dominated the period, and its descriptions of battles pale in comparison with those in the Sino-Japanese mixed style found in contemporary war chronicles such as the *Jōkyūki* (*Record of the Jōkyu Disturbance*) and the *Taiheiki*.

The narrative structure of *The Clear Mirror* is reminiscent of that of *The Tale of Genji*. For example, the exiles of Emperors GoToba and GoDaigo to Oki, two climactic points in the narrative, strongly echo Genji's exile to Suma in their style, heavy use of waka, allusions to classical and Chinese poetry, and sense of melancholy and longing for the capital. In the scene translated here, describing GoToba's exile at Oki, GoToba assumes the aura of the protagonist Genji. The author of *The Clear Mirror* borrows waka from the *Hundred Poem Collection of Retired Emperor GoToba* (*GoTobain no hyakushu*) and has GoToba think of the same Bo Juyi poem "about the heart of a friend two thousand leagues away" that Genji does in exile. The effect is not only to superimpose Genji on GoToba but also to imply that, like Genji, GoToba has been unjustly exiled, thereby implicitly placating the spirit of the dead emperor.

The author of *The Clear Mirror* is thought to be Nijō Yoshimoto (1320–1388), a noted waka poet and one of the founders of orthodox renga. Nijō Yoshimoto was regent four times and served four generations of Northern Court emperors (beginning with Emperor Kōmyō). If he was the author, the text would have been written between 1368 and 1376. A more recent theory argues for Kenkō, the author of *Essays in Idleness* (*Tzurezuregusa*), which would make the date of composition around 1338. In any case, *The Clear Mirror* was written sometime between 1338 and 1376, probably between 1368 and 1376, when Ashikaga Yoshimitsu (r. 1368–1394, 1358–1408), the third Muromachi shogun, was trying to revive various court rituals.

"Through Tangled Thickets" (Odoro no shita), the opening chapter, presents Emperor GoToba (son of Emperor GoShirakawa) as an ideal Heian emperor, a man of belles lettres and poetic sensitivity. The author also sees GoToba as having re-created

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the throne for only forty-nine days.[5] Might there have been a similar disturbance then?

Retired Emperor Tsuchimikado[6] escaped the shogunate's censure because he had never had anything to do with the affair, but he departed of his own will for Hata in Tosa Province[7] on the tenth day of the intercalary Tenth Month, holding that it would be very wrong to lead a peaceful life in the capital while his father languished in distant exile. I think it was around the second month of the previous year that he had become the father of a young prince, the offspring of a daughter of Shōmeimon-in's prematurely deceased older brother, Consultant-Middle Captain Michimune. He left the child at the house of Michimune's younger brother, Michikata, and set out, all alone except for some servants and a junior north guard who was a close attendant. His conveyance was a crude hand-held palanquin. A fierce snowstorm blew up on the way, darkening the sky and obscuring the road in both directions. He expressed his despair in verse, his sleeves icy with frozen tears:

ukiyo ni wa	I was doubtless born
kakare tote koso	fated to suffer like this
mumarekeme	in the fleeting world.
kotowari shiranu	Can it be that my tears
waga namida kana	have failed to grasp the truth?[8]

The Retired Emperor Tsuchimikado moved to Awa Province[9] later, after a suggestion from Kamakura that he at least live nearer the capital.

The country was in a lamentable state. We are told that the Buddha spoke of 18,000 sovereigns who actually killed their own fathers for the throne.[10] Furthermore, there have been countless struggles for hegemony in Japan and China ever since the world entered the age of degeneracy. No doubt there has been a cause for each one: sometimes ministers of a different lineage or even persons of royal blood have been denied influence by some small unexpected development, and the consequent resentment has led to strife. But very, very seldom in our country have subjects of no status crushed an emperor, as happened in this case. Masakado in the Shōhei era [931–937], Sumitomo in the Tengyō [938–946], and Yoshichika in the Kōwa [1099–1103] were all courageous men, but not one of them was able to prevail against an imperial edict.

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5. Ziying (d. 206 B.C.E.), a grandson of Shihuangdi of Qin (259–210 B.C.E.), who ascended the throne in 207 B.C.E. and was deposed forty-six days later.

6. Emperor Tsuchimikado (r. 1198–1210) was the first son of Emperor GoToba.

7. A province in southern Shikoku.

8. *Shokukokinshū*, no. 1845.

9. A province on the east side of Shikoku.

10. Kanmuryōju-kyō (Skt. Amitayūr-dhyana-sutra).

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Furthermore, when Retired Emperor Sutoku attempted a coup in the Hōgen era, the reigning emperor, GoShirakawa,[11] brought him down to defeat, for which reason the men of old said that even though a rebel might belong to the imperial family, the sun goddess would apparently protect the occupant of the throne. Although the Gate Guards Commander Nobuyori presumed to threaten Emperor Nijō,[12] his lifeless corpse lay abandoned by the roadside in the end. With those incidents in mind, people considered it out of the question that anyone might destroy a court consisting of three retired emperors and a reigning sovereign. We must look beyond this world for an explanation of what happened—a truth incomprehensible to those too ignorant to understand karmic law.

Retired Emperor GoToba ascended the throne at the age of four and reigned for fifteen years. Even after his abdication, he continued to rule during the twelve-year reign of Emperor Tsuchimikado and the eleven-year reign of Emperor Juntoku.[13] As master of the realm for thirty-eight years, he governed just as he pleased, controlling all officialdom and exercising a dominion more powerful than a gale bending trees and grasses to its will. With compassion more abundant than showering raindrops, he pitied the distant folk and cherished those near at hand; though affairs of state permitted him spare moments no more frequent than gaps in the well-thatched roof of a cottage in Settsu, he remained ever alert to prevent the nation from becoming as disordered as tangled reeds at Naniwa. The pines on the peak at his lofty dwelling ought to have added one branch on another and flourished through 1,000 and 8,000 years; he ought to have resided in his immortal's grotto through countless springs, enjoying peace and tranquillity as endless as the rising and setting of the sun and moon. But now, because of a single trifling incident, he and his kin were forced to leave the brilliant capital and scatter, each to his own place of exile, condemned to dwell under eaves jostled by the crude thatches of fishing shacks on rocky shores. Visited only by small boats coming to fish the waters of the bays, they spent their time gazing at smoke plumes from salt-makers' fires, wondering if the drifting columns pointed the way toward home. Even had there been fixed terms to their sentences, they would still have suffered from the uncertainty of life in this world. But what words can describe the wretchedness of men doomed to spend their lives on distant isles, separated from home by misty leagues of waves, with no inkling of when they might meet again in the capital, their lonely exile finally at an end?

Retired Emperor GoToba settled into an isolated island dwelling, a place far from human habitations. The house stood against a towering rock in the

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11. GoShirakawa (r. 1155–1158) became a cloistered emperor and controlled the throne for five imperial reigns. He was the editor of the *Ryōjin hishō*.

12. Emperor Nijō (r. 1158–1165) was the son of Emperor GoShirakawa.

13. GoToba (1180–1239, r. 1183–1198) ceded the throne in 1198 and ruled as a cloistered emperor (*in*) until his defeat in the Jōkyū rebellion (1221).

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ayame fuku	A rushing wind blows
kaya ga nokiba ni	across eaves thatched with grasses
kaze sugite	and decked with sweet flag;
shidoro ni otsuru	raindrops falling in torrents
murasame no tsuyu	veer and swirl as they descend.[16]

Life seemed sadder than ever when the winds of early autumn began to blow. His Majesty's tears increased with the increasing dew, and his misery was beyond words.

furusato o	No return for me—
wakareji ni ouru	not though autumn has arrived,
kuzu no ha no	the season when leaves
aki wa kuredomo	turn back on the kudzu vines
kaeru yo mo nashi	along the road that led from home.[17]

In a particularly despondent mood one evening, he saw something resembling a distant fishing boat, drifting shoreward like a tiny leaf. It proved to be a vessel carrying a message from the city. In the cold of the nights there, Shichijō-in[18] had thought of him from far away and had sent him black clerical robes and bedding. A lump rose in his throat as he opened her letter, and he was forced to calm himself before reading it.

"These have been wretched months and days for me," she wrote. "If only I could see you just once more before this feeble old life ends! I don't see how I can even get across the Shide Mountains with things as they are." She rambled on in the same vein. He pressed the letter to his face.

tarachine no	Mother clings to life,
kieyarade matsu	her body fragile as a dewdrop,
tsuyu no mi o	awaiting my return.
kaze yori saki ni	If only I might visit her
ika de towamashi	before the death wind blows! . . .

[Translated by George Perkins]

KITABATAKE CHIKAFUSA

Kitabatake Chikafusa (1293–1354) was an aristocrat who was born into the Murakami Genji (Minamoto) lineage, a powerful regental family, and actively

16. *Gyokuyōshū*, no. 345.

17. Kudzu leaves, which are white underneath, are associated in classical poetry with *ura* (reverse side) and *hirugaeru* (turn over), but there is no *kaeru* (return) for the retired emperor.

18. The mother (1157–1228) of the retired emperor GoToba.

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served Emperor GoDaigo (r. 1318–1339). At the young age of thirty-three, Chikafusa became the head of the Genji lineage. Emperor GoDaigo had great trust in him, charging him with the education of his son, the future emperor GoMurakami. After the Kenmu restoration failed as result of Ashikaga Takauji's defection, Chikafusa led an army to the capital, but he was pushed back by the Northern army and retreated to Ise, where he met Watarai Ieyuki and others and studied Shinto. In 1338, Chikafusa went by sea from Ise to the Kantō region, hoping to gather support for the Southern army in the east. On his way, he encountered a typhoon that forced him to land in Hitachi Province and enter Oda Castle. It was there, in 1339, that he finished *A Chronicle of Gods and Sovereigns* (*Jinnō shōtōki*), revising it in 1343. It is believed that Chikafusa wrote this history while on the front lines, for the son of GoDaigo, the future GoMurakami.

A CHRONICLE OF GODS AND SOVEREIGNS (*JINNŌ SHŌTŌKI*, 1339, 1343)

Kitabatake Chikafusa differed radically from other aristocratic authors of the medieval period in his direct engagement with contemporary affairs. Indeed, he wrote *Jinnō shōtōki* (literally, *A Chronicle of the Direct Descent of the Gods and Sovereigns*) in order to redirect the military alignments in the midst of chaos and war. He also wrote *Jinnō shōtōki* for the eastern warriors, particularly the chieftain Yūki Chikatomo, whom he was attempting to bring over to the side of the Southern Court (ultimately unsuccessfully). That is, Chikafusa wrote *Jinnō shōtōki* in order to show how a government should be run, and he drew on ancient texts and mythology to bolster his argument.

Jinnō shōtōki begins with the age of the gods and then moves to the "human sovereigns," from Emperor Jinmu to Emperor GoDaigo and his son Emperor GoMurakami (r. 1339–1368). But *Jinnō shōtōki* is more than a history; Chikafusa asserts his own strong opinions, which reflect Ise Shinto thought. In the opening passage, which is included here, he emphasizes the character of Japan as *shinkoku*, or "the land of the gods," a concept first found in the *Nihon shoki* and the *Kojiki*. The premise of the new Shinto thought that emerged in the Kamakura period was that the *kami* (Shinto gods) were the true protectors of the country rather than the Buddhist deities, who, since at least the seventh century, had been thought to perform this function. Later Chikafusa points to the effectiveness of these kami when the *kamikaze*, the "divine winds," arose to annihilate the enemy fleets during the two Mongol invasions of Japan in 1274 and 1281.

Chikafusa also contends that the Sun Goddess's mandate guaranteed that Japan and its imperial family would continue forever, a position that the ultranationalists adopted in the 1930s. Throughout the book, Chikafusa argues for the absolute authority of the emperor and for a direct line within the imperial succession, a critical issue during the period of the Northern and Southern Courts. Interestingly, however, and reflecting his own aristocratic origins, Chikafusa looked back to an imperial restoration

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in which the actual governing power reverted from the military to the hands of the regents, to the Fujiwara and Murakami Genji who would serve the "restored" emperors.

The following passage, which opens *Jinnō shōtōki*, has three main points of interest, all of which relate to national identity: the significance of the various names for Japan, the stress on the uniqueness and strength of Japan as a result of its "unbroken line" of imperial succession, and the meaning of the three sacred regalia of the imperial family.

Preface

Great Japan is the land of the gods.[19] The heavenly progenitor[20] founded it, and the sun goddess bequeathed it to her descendants to rule eternally. Only in our country is this true; there are no similar examples in other countries.[21] This is why our country is called the land of the gods.

During the age of the gods, Japan was known as Toyoashihara-no-Chiiho-no-Aki-no-Mizuho-no-kuni (Land of Abundant Reed Plains, Fifteen Hundred Autumns, and Fresh Rice Ears). This name was used from the time when heaven and earth were separated, and can be found in the directive that the heavenly progenitor, Kuni-no-Tokotachi-no-mikoto (Lord Who Permanently Established the Country) presented to the deities Izanami and Izanagi. The name also appears in the mandate that the sun goddess, Amaterasu, gave to her heavenly grandson, Ninigi. It may therefore be regarded as the original designation for our country.

Another name for Japan is the land of Eight Great Islands,[22] which derives from the fact that Izanagi and Izanami created the country in the form of eight islands.

Still another name for Japan is Yamato, taken from a province in the middle of the land of Eight Great Islands. The eighth deity produced by Izanagi and Izanami was Ame-no-Misora-Toyoakizune-wake, who was designated Ō-Yamato-Toyoakizu Island. Today this island is divided into forty-eight provinces, the most central of which is Yamato. Because of its centrality, Yamato served for generations after Emperor Jinmu's eastward campaign as the imperial seat; and because Yamato held the imperial seat, its name was applied as well to the rest of Japan.[23]

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19. *Shinkoku*.

20. Kuni-no-Tokotachi-no-mikoto (Lord Who Permanently Established the Country).

21. The term "other countries" (*ichō*) is often used to mean China, but Chikafusa probably is referring to India and China, the countries he most commonly cites in *Jinnō shōtōki* to compare with Japan.

22. Ō-Yashima. *Ya* (eight) was a sacred number and could also mean a "great many" or "myriad."

23. That is, to the seven other great islands.

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In a similar manner, China was for a time called Zhou because the ruling dynasty emerged from that state; later the country became known as Han because the succeeding dynasty arose in the state of Han.

The name Yamato may come from the expression *yama-ato*, or "mountain traces." In early times, when heaven and earth had divided but the wet mud below had not yet coagulated, people could only move about on the mountains. The traces they left at that time were called *yama-ato*. Another possible meaning for Yamato comes from the word *to*, which in the ancient language of Japan meant "dwelling." Perhaps it was because the people dwelt in the mountains (*yama*) that the country became known as *yama-to*.[24]

Japan's name may be written with the characters for Dai Nihon (Great Japan) or Dai Wa (Great Wa).[25] The decision to render the name of our country in characters as Dai Nihon was made after the introduction of Chinese writing,[26] although the characters were actually pronounced Yamato. The characters for Dai Nihon—"great sun-source"—may have been selected either because Japan is overseen from above by the great goddess of the sun, Amaterasu, or because it is geographically situated near the place where the sun rises. And even though the characters for "sun" and "source" may have either of these two meanings, they should not be pronounced as *hi no moto* (base of the sun). The correct *kun* or Japanese reading for them is Yamato. . . .

The origin of things in our country, whereby the world was produced by the descendants of the gods on high, bears some resemblance to the creation story of India. A significant difference is that, from the time of the heavenly founder, Kuni-no-Tokotachi-no-mikoto (Lord Who Permanently Established the Country), there has been no disruption in dynastic succession in Japan. Our country has been ruled without interruption by the sovereigns of a single dynastic line. In India the first sovereign, the people's lord, was selected by the people and was succeeded by his descendants. But in later generations many members of the lord's line perished and even a man of mean origins, if he possessed the military power, could become king—or rise to be ruler of all India.

China is also a country that tends strongly toward disorder. In early times, when life in China was simple and the right way prevailed, men of wisdom were selected to occupy the imperial office. But no single, immutable dynastic line was founded, and whenever the country lapsed into disorder, people mustered their forces and contended for hegemony. Men arose from among the common people to become emperors, and there were also cases of barbarians

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24. This paragraph is based on a passage from Urabe Kanekata, *Shaku Nihongi* (1:11), a medieval Shinto commentary on the *Nihongi*.

25. *Wa* is the name given to Japan by the ancient chroniclers of the Chinese dynastic histories. The earliest reference to the land of Wa in the eastern sea appears in the *History of the Former Han Dynasty*.

26. *Kanji* is the word used to refer to the Chinese characters used to write Japanese.

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who emerged and seized control of the country. In still other cases, hereditary vassals surpassed their lords and ultimately succeeded to the emperorships held by the latter. Since the time of the first ruler, Fuxi, there have been thirty-six dynastic changes in China. The resulting disorder has been unspeakable.

In our country alone, the imperial succession has followed in an unbroken line from the time when heaven and earth were divided until the present age. Although, as is inevitable within a single family, the succession has at times been transmitted collaterally, the principle has prevailed that it will invariably return to the direct line. This is entirely the result of the immutable mandate of Amaterasu, and is the reason why Japan differs from all other countries.

The way of the gods (*shintō*) is not readily revealed. Yet if the divine basis of things is not understood, such ignorance will surely give rise to disorder. To rectify the ignorance that is the cause of disorder, I have been motivated to take up my brush. Since my chief aim is to discuss the principles of direct succession to the throne from the age of the gods, I shall omit discussion of matters that are commonly known. I have decided to name what I write "The Chronicle of the Direct Descent of Gods and Sovereigns."

The Age of the Gods

. . . Before bestowing the imperial regalia upon Ninigi, Amaterasu addressed him with these words: "Ashihara-no-Chiiho-no-Aki-no-Mizuho-no-kuni (Land of Abundant Reed Plains, Fifteen Hundred Autumns, and Fresh Rice Ears) is a land that shall be ruled by my descendants. Go there and rule. Go, and may your line prosper eternally, like heaven and earth." Taking the sacred mirror in her hand, Amaterasu intoned the prayer: "Whenever you look upon this mirror, may it be as though you are looking upon me. Keep it with you as your sacred mirror, in your bed and under your roof."

Thus the Yata mirror, the Yasakani jewels, and the Ame-no-Murakumo sword came to comprise the imperial regalia. Amaterasu further enjoined Ninigi: "As the mirror is bright, illuminate the world; as the jewels spread broadly, rule with their wonderful sway; and, with the sword, subdue all those who do not submit to your rule."[27] We can clearly see in these decrees that the divine spirit of our country lies in the legitimate passage of the emperorship to the descendants of a single family. Transmission of the regalia through the generations is as fixed as the sun, moon, and stars in heaven. The mirror is the body of the

27. An injunction similar to this appears in the *Nihon shoki*, but in the words of a local chieftain of Kyushu addressed to Emperor Chūai when the emperor went to that island to pacify the Kumaso tribesmen. See W. G. Aston, trans., *Nihongi: Chronicles of Japan from the Earliest Times to* A.D. *697* (Tokyo: Tuttle, 1972), 221. The injunction was subsequently incorporated into the writings of Ise Shinto (such as *Jinnō keizu*) as the words of Amaterasu.

Bahan dengan hak cipta

they unfurled two Chrysanthemum and Water[39] standards to flutter in the wind of the pines that blew from east and west out of the shade of the mountain's trees and, enveloped by the swirling mists, advanced their horses silently toward the enemy. As they watched the oncoming horsemen, the force from the eastern provinces hesitated, wondering whether the horsemen were friends or foes. Then from both directions, east and west, the 300 riders raised their battle cries in unison and, using a wedge-like formation, attacked the center of the 300,000-man army that was spread out like clouds and mists before them. Surrounding the easterners on all sides, the attackers cut them down from every direction. Utterly bewildered, the easterners were unable even to form ranks.

Just then, three gates within the fortress opened simultaneously and 200 horsemen riding side by side sallied forth, firing a torrent of arrows. The easterners, although mighty in numbers, were surprised and shaken by this small force. Some leaped onto horses that were tethered together, urged the animals forward, but went nowhere. Others fitted arrows to bows with loosened strings and futilely tried to shoot them. Two or three men grabbed a suit of armor and pulled it back and forth, each contending that it was his. Meanwhile, if a lord was killed, his vassals knew nothing of it; and if a parent was struck down, he received no aid from his children. Spreading out like little spiders, the men of the eastern army withdrew to Ishikawagahara. The path of fifty *chō* to that place became littered with abandoned horses and discarded armor—to the point where one could not even find a place to step. And so, it seems, the residents of Tōjō village soon became rich.[40]

Thus the army of the eastern provinces was unexpectedly defeated. And having lost in this, their first battle, the easterners realized that Kusunoki Masashige's strategy was not to be scorned. Although they marched upon Handa and Narabara, they gave no indication of attacking Akasaka Fortress again soon. Instead, they decided to stay where they were for a while and, with people familiar with the vicinity leading them, clear away the trees and bushes in the mountains and burn all the houses to prevent an attack from the rear; then, with their safety secured, renew their assault on the fortress. But the Honma and Shibuya, among whom many had lost parents and children, excitedly declared, "What's the sense of continuing to live? Even though we're the only ones, we'll ride forth and meet our deaths!" Spurred on by these words, all of the easterners set out—"Me first!"—to attack Akasaka Fortress.

Only the fortress's eastern approach was somewhat steep, with mountain paddy fields rising high, terrace after terrace. The other three approaches opened onto level land; and since there was only one moat and the fortress had only one wall, how much resistance could these approaches mount against

39. *Kikusui*, the crest of the Kusunoki family.

40. The residents of Tōjō collected the discarded equipment.

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no one knows how many of the enemy. Yet the enemy has a huge army, and there is no sign of its weakening. Our fortress is already short of food, and there is no hope that reinforcements will come. From the outset I have wished to take the lead among warriors in bringing peace to the land. I would not regret giving my life in defense of my honor and in pursuit of my duty. But the brave warrior, when dealing with a matter, must be cautious and, enjoying strategy, plot carefully.[41] Therefore, I think we should abandon this fortress for a while and have the enemy believe that I have committed suicide. I suggest this because, if the men of the eastern army are convinced that I have killed myself, they will be overjoyed and return to Kantō. Once they have left, I will come forth and attack them again; then, when they return, I will retreat deep into the mountains. After I have made sport of them in this way four or five times, the easterners will surely become dispirited. This is my strategy for preserving my life and destroying the enemy. What do all of you think?" All, without exception, agreed with what Masashige said.

Thereupon they dug a large hole some two *jō*[42] deep in the fortress, gathered twenty or thirty of the bodies of men from the many who had been killed and had fallen in the moat during the several days of fighting, and put them into the hole. Piling charcoal and firewood on the bodies, they waited for a night when the wind blew and the rain poured. Surely heaven looked with favor on Masashige's fate, for soon the wind blew, swirling up the sand, and the rain pelted down as though piercing bamboo. The night was plunged into darkness, and the enemy in the camps all quietly lowered the curtains of their tents. This was the night the defenders were waiting for.

Masashige left one man behind in the fortress, telling him, "After we have escaped and you judge that we have gone four or five *chō*, set fire to the fortress." The other men of the fortress then all shed their armor, moved out among the attackers, and, in groups of three and five, quietly escaped, passing in front of the enemy guard office and near where the enemy slept. When Masashige passed by the Nagasaki stable,[43] he was spotted by an enemy. Challenging him, the man said, "Who is it who passes stealthily before this place without announcing his name?" Masashige replied over his shoulder, "I am a retainer of the commander of samurai. I seem to have lost my way," and hurried on. The man said, "Just as I thought, a strange fellow. No doubt he's a horse rustler. I'll just shoot him down!" Whereupon the man ran up close to Masashige and fired an arrow at him point blank. The arrow struck Masashige's elbow joint,

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41. "If I took anyone it would have to be a man who, when faced with a task, was fearful of failure and who, while fond of making plans, was capable of successful execution" (Confucius, *The Analects*, trans. D. C. Lau [London: Penguin, 1979], 87).

42. One *jō* equals 3.314 yards.

43. The stable managed by Nagasaki Shirō Takasado.

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and appeared to penetrate deeply. But, in fact, it didn't even touch Masashige's body, which was unprotected by armor. Instead, it flew back toward whence it came.

Later, when Masashige examined the spot where the arrow hit, he saw that it had struck an amulet containing the Kannon Sutra that he had devotedly read for years. Strange as it may seem, the arrowhead had stopped at the two-line verse, "Intently reciting the name."

Masashige had escaped sure death by the arrowhead. Now, after fleeing about twenty *chō*, he looked back and saw that the buildings of the fortress had been quickly put to the torch as ordered. The men of the attacking army, startled by the flames, thought, "So, the fortress has fallen!" and raised their victory cry. Excitedly they shouted, "Kill them all! Don't let any escape!" After the fire died down and they looked inside the fortress, they saw a great hole full of ashes and the remains of many incinerated bodies. Viewing this, there was not one easterner who failed to offer this praise, "Ah, how sad. Masashige has finally committed suicide. Although he was an enemy, as a man of bow and arrow he fought and died splendidly."

Book 7

THE BATTLE OF CHIHAYA FORTRESS

Chihaya Fortress, which Masashige occupied in 1333, proved to be an even more stubborn outpost of opposition to the Kamakura shogunate than Akasaka Fortress, and the repeated failure of the shogunate's army to destroy it helped set the stage for the shogunate's own destruction later that year. In the following scene, Chihaya Fortress, defended by only a thousand men, is attacked by a massive army. But when the men of the army rashly assault the fortress without adequate preparation, they are decimated by the rocks and arrows poured down on them by the defenders. The attackers then try to defeat the defenders by cutting off their water supply. But Masashige has prepared in advance and is well supplied with water. Another frontal assault on the fortress also fails.

After surveying the situation, Nagasaki Shirō Saemon-no-jō issued an order, saying, "Attacking this fortress with force alone only results in the deaths of our own men. It cannot succeed. Let's just surround the fortress and starve them out." But when the men of the attacking force suspended the battle, they found that they had nothing to do. So they called down linked-verse masters[44] from Kyoto and began the composition of a 10,000-verse sequence. Nagasaki Shirō Saemon Morotane composed the first verse on the first day:

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44. *Hana no moto* (beneath the cherry blossoms) linked-verse masters, who composed outdoors underneath the cherry trees.

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sakikakete	First of flowers in the spring
katsu iro miseyo	show your colors—
yamazakura.	mountain cherry.

Kudō Jirō Saemon-no-jō responded with this verse:

arashi ya hana no	The storm becomes
kataki naruran.	the flowers' enemy.

Indeed, both verses were excellently constructed and formed a fine sequence. But because the poets likened their side to flowers and the enemy to a storm, people afterward wondered why they had composed such inauspicious lines.

In response to the commanders' orders, the entire army had ceased hostilities; but now there was apparently little to do to while away the time. Some men played *gō*, and others passed the days competing at backgammon. Still others spent the nights participating in hundred-cup tea-tasting contests and in verse-judging games. This had the effect of distressing the men in the fortress, who had no means of dispelling the gloom of their situation.

After a while, Masashige thought, "Things being as they are, let's play a trick on the enemy and wake him up." Taking rubbish, he made twenty or thirty life-sized dolls, which he outfitted with helmets and armor and armed with weapons. In the middle of the night he stood these dolls at the foot of the fortress and placed folding shields in front of them. Behind the dolls, he stationed five hundred hand-picked soldiers. As the light of dawn shone faintly through the mists, the five hundred suddenly raised their battle cry in unison. Hearing this, the enemy of the four directions surrounding the fortress exclaimed, "Look! They're coming out of the fortress to attack! Now their fortune is at an end. Let them go into their death frenzies!" Shouting "Me first!" the besiegers rushed forward to do battle. But the soldiers of the fortress had planned carefully beforehand. Appearing briefly to engage in the usual exchange of arrows,[45] they drew the great force of the besiegers toward them. Then, leaving the dolls in the shadow of the trees, they all gradually withdrew back up to the fortress. The besiegers thought the dolls were real soldiers, and gathered to strike them down.

Having thus deceived the enemy into attacking as he had planned, Masashige quickly threw forty or fifty huge boulders in a group down upon them. More than three hundred of the enemy, gathered in one place, were instantly crushed to death, and another five hundred or so were left half dead and half alive. When the battle was over and the besiegers looked around, they observed,

45. The "exchange of arrows" (*ya-awase*) was the traditional way of commencing a battle.

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sadly, that those they had regarded as stalwart men—soldiers who did not retreat a step—were not real people at all but dolls made of straw. There was no glory in gathering to attack such dolls and, instead, many had died, being struck with boulders or pierced by arrows. On the other hand, those who had feared the dolls and failed to attack were in the pitiful situation of having revealed the extent of their cowardice. In both cases, the men of the besieging army became the laughingstock of everyone.

After this, the fighting came completely to a halt. With time on their hands, the forces from the various provinces could only stare up at the fortress, helpless to do anything. It was at this point that someone composed a poem, changing the lines of a verse from the *Shinkokinshū*, and hung it in front of the commander's camp.

yoso ni nomi	Is it to be seen
mite ya yaminan	only from afar?
Katsuragi no	The camphor tree on the peak
Takama no yama no	of Takama Mountain
mine no kusunoki.	of Katsuragi.[46]

With no battle to fight and their men bored with the idleness of their standoff, the commanders of the various forces of the besieging army summoned women of pleasure from Eguchi and Kanzaki to their camps and engaged them in different kinds of entertainment. Nagoya Tōtōmi-no-Nyūdō [the Lay Priest of Tōtōmi] and Nagoya Hyōgo-no-Suke were uncle and nephew. Both were commanders who had been attacking from the same direction. They had established their camp near an approach to the fortress, and had aligned their tents side by side. One time they were playing backgammon in front of some of the courtesans and got into a dispute over the spots on the dice. After apparently exchanging a few words, the two—uncle and nephew—stabbed each other to death. The retainers of these men, although having no differences among themselves, thereupon began stabbing one another and before long the number of dead totaled more than two hundred. The men in the fortress, observing these happenings, mockingly said, "Look at the sight of them destroying each other. It's heaven's punishment for rebelling against the emperor." Indeed, this was not something ordinary, but the doing of Tenma Hajun.[47] A wretched business indeed.

On the fourth day of the Third Month, a speedy horseman arrived from Kantō with a message saying, "We are not at all pleased that you have ceased fighting and are spending your days doing nothing." The leading commanders

46. "Camphor tree" is the *kusunoki*.

47. Tenma Hajun is a demon responsible for violating the true law of Buddhism.

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thereupon conferred together and devised a plan to built a bridge over the deep moat that separated their position from the enemy and to attack the fortress across it. For this purpose, they summoned more than five hundred carpenters from Kyoto. They had the carpenters gather lumber about 15–27 centimeters thick and build a suspension bridge five meters wide and sixty meters long. When the bridge was completed, the carpenters tied two to three thousand thick ropes to it and, winding them up with a pulley, attached the bridge to the top of the cliff upon which the fortress stood. The bridge was so skillfully constructed it reminded one of Lu Pan's "bridge of the clouds."[48]

Immediately, five to six thousand intrepid warriors advanced—"Me first!"—across the bridge, believing that this time the fortress would surely fall quickly. But Kusunoki Masashige had prepared for this in advance. He lit pine torches, piled them like firewood on the bridge, and with a pump poured oil over them like a waterfall. The fire from the torches set the bridge's beams ablaze, and fierce winds from the valley whipped the flaming beams into an inferno. When the warriors who had set out rashly to cross the bridge tried to advance, they were scorched by the raging fire. When they attempted to turn back, they were blocked by the great host in the rear, who were oblivious to the danger ahead. The warriors might have jumped off the sides of the bridge, but were struck with terror at the thought of the cavernous valley and towering cliffs. As they clamored and jostled one another in panic, not knowing what to do, the beams burned through and the bridge collapsed in a heap at the bottom of the valley. Thousands of warriors fell together into the roaring flames, and were all—every one of them—burned to death. The scene very much resembled the suffering of sinners in the eight great hells, impaled on sword-shaped mountains, pierced by trees with sword-like branches, and burned by fire and molten iron.

Meanwhile, some seven thousand guerrillas from Yoshino, Totsugawa, Uda, and Uchinokōri, who had assembled under orders from Prince Morinaga, lay hidden here and there in the valley and on the mountain and were blocking all the roads to and from the besieging army at Chihaya. As a result, the supplies of warriors from the various provinces were quickly exhausted, and both they and their horses suffered grievously. Unable to hold out longer, the warriors began absconding, a hundred or two hundred at a time, in an attempt to return to their homes. But guerrillas familiar with the countryside waited in ambush at strategic places, and day and night killed countless numbers of them. Those rare few who escaped with their lives abandoned their horses, helmets, and armor and stripped off their clothes until naked. Some attempted to cover themselves by wrapping straw around their bodies; others bound leaves of grass around their waists. Day after day endless streams of these shameless fugitives

48. Lu Pan was a famous carpenter who is said to have built a ladder that reached to the clouds in the defense of his state of Lu against an attack by Song.

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fled in all directions. Never before had there been such disgraceful behavior. Armor and swords of the warriors of Japan, passed down for generations, were at this time all lost. The two Nago—the Lay Priest of Tōtōmi and Hyōgo-no-Suke—died together over a pointless argument. Among the other warriors, if parents were killed, children cut their topknots and became monks; and if lords were wounded, their vassals withdrew to care for them. What was said to have been an army of 800,000[49] riders was reduced to only 100,000.

Book 16

MASASHIGE GOES DOWN TO HYŌGO

GoDaigo's imperial restoration lasted for only three years. When Ashikaga Takauji (1305–1358), who aspired to be the shogun, or military hegemon, of the land, turned against the restoration government, he precipitated a period of fighting that continued for nearly sixty years. During the early stages of battling between GoDaigo's loyalists and the Ashikaga "rebels," the military advantage shifted back and forth. Early in 1336, the Ashikaga withdrew briefly to Kyushu to rebuild their army. Then, under the leadership of Ashikaga Takauji and his brother Tadayoshi (1306–1352), they returned to the central provinces to engage the loyalists, headed by Nitta Yoshisada, at the battle of Minatogawa in Hyōgo (in present-day Kobe). Victory in this decisive encounter enabled Takauji to capture Kyoto (forcing GoDaigo to flee to Yoshino, where he founded the Southern Court) and to establish the Ashikaga shogunate. (Ashikaga Takauji ruled as shogun from 1338 to 1358.) In the following passage, GoDaigo rejects Kusunoki Masashige's strategy for dealing with the great Ashikaga army advancing up from Kyushu, thereby invalidating Masashige's earlier promise that "so long as you hear that Masashige alone is alive, know that your imperial destiny will in the end be attained."

As Lords Takauji and Tadayoshi headed toward the capital in command of a great army, Yoshisada sent a messenger on a fleet horse to the palace to report that he was pulling back to Hyōgo in order to establish a position from which to defend against the Ashikaga. The emperor, greatly alarmed, sent for Kusunoki Masashige. "Go quickly to Hyōgo to join forces with Yoshisada and do battle," he ordered.

Respectfully, Masashige replied, "Since Lord Takauji is already on his way up to the capital in command of an army from the nine provinces of Kyushu, his might will surely be as vast as clouds and mist. I fear that if a small, tired force like ours were to engage such a giant enemy army in high spirits, it would, by fighting in the conventional manner, undoubtedly be defeated. I recommend

49. The army was said to have numbered 1 million at the beginning of this passage. Although the text speaks of "800,000 riders," the bulk of an army of any substantial size during this age probably was composed of mostly foot soldiers armed with spears.

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naginata[56] with metal grip, Jūrōjirō slashed the chests of the oncoming horses, felling one after another. In all, he cut down seven or eight riders. Tadayoshi, meanwhile, had changed mounts and fled far from the scene.

The shogun, Takauji, observing Tadayoshi's retreat in the face of the Kusunoki attack, issued an order: "Bring in fresh troops, and make sure Tadayoshi is not killed." Whereupon some six thousand riders of the Kira, Ishitō, Kō, and Uesugi galloped to the east of Minatogawa and surrounded the Kusunoki forces and cut off any retreat. Turning back, Masashige and Masasue charged into the encircling horde, clashing with them, grappling them down, and killing them. For six hours they fought sixteen times; but gradually their force was diminished, until only seventy-three remained. If they had tried to break through the enemy lines and escape, they could have. But Masashige had decided when he left the capital that this would mark the end of his time in this world. So the Kusunoki fought on, without retreating a step, until their energy was exhausted. They then went north of Minatogawa and rushed into a house in one of the villages.

Masashige stripped off his armor in order to cut his belly. Examining himself, he found that he had suffered sword wounds in eleven places. Among the other seventy-two men, not one had fewer than three to five wounds.

The thirteen members of the Kusunoki family and their sixty retainers aligned themselves in two rows in the six-bay reception hall. Reciting the *nenbutsu*[57] ten times in unison, they cut their bellies as one. Masashige, occupying the seat of honor, turned to his brother Masasue. "Well now, it is said that one's last thoughts in this life determine the goodness or evil of one's next incarnation. Into which of the nine realms of existence would you like to be reborn?" Laughing loudly, Masasue replied: "It is my wish to be reborn again and again for seven lives into this same existence in order to destroy the enemies of the court!" Masashige was greatly pleased. "Although it is deeply sinful, it is also my wish. Let us therefore be born again into this life to fulfill our cherished dream!" Stabbing each other, the brothers fell down on the same pillow.

Sixteen men from prominent families, including Hashimoto Hachirō Masakazu, the Governor of Kawachi, Usami Masayasu, Jingūji Tarō Masamoro, and Wada Gorō Masataka, along with fifty of their followers, lined up in a row, each in his own way, and cut their bellies.

Kikuchi Shichirō Taketomo had come as the emissary of his older brother, the Governor of Hizen, to observe the fighting at Suma-guchi, and happened upon Masashige's *seppuku*. How, he thought, could he shamelessly forsake Masashige and return home? And so he too committed suicide and fell into the flames.[58]

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56. A spearlike weapon with a curved blade.
57. Praise to Amida Buddha.
58. This is the first mention of flames or fire.

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From the Genkō era, tens of millions of people graciously came forth in response to His Majesty's call, served loyally, and distinguished themselves in battle. But since this rebellion erupted, people ignorant of the way of benevolence have flouted the imperial favor and joined the enemy. Feckless individuals, hoping to escape death, have surrendered and, contrary to their expectations, have been executed. Other ignorant people, not comprehending the trend of the times, have gone against the way. In the midst of this, Masashige, a man combining the three virtues of wisdom, benevolence, and courage, whose fidelity is unequaled by anyone from ancient times to the present, has chosen death as the proper way. His and his brother's deaths by suicide are omens that a sage sovereign has again lost the country and traitorous subjects are running amok.

[Translated by Paul H. Varley]

CLASSICAL LINKED VERSE (*RENGA*)

Linked verse (*renga*) emerged as a major poetic genre in the Northern and Southern Courts (1336–1392) and Muromachi (1392–1573) periods. Its most celebrated characteristic is one that is prominent in many other arts of that time—collaborative production. Rather than being the work of one poet, renga sequences were created by two or more people working together in a "session" (*za*), each composing stanzas of seventeen or fourteen syllables in turn. Renga was first practiced as a verse-capping game by Heian courtiers and is best described in the early stages of its history as one waka composed by two people. One person would compose an incomplete waka, giving only the "upper half" (*moto no ku*) in seventeen syllables and challenging a second person to finish the poem by adding the "lower half" (*sue no ku*) in fourteen syllables, thus making a complete waka: thirty-one syllables following the conventional metrical pattern of 5/7/5–7/7 syllables. This is sometimes called *tan-renga* (short linked verse).

The next logical step was to link yet another seventeen-syllable verse to the fourteen-syllable verse before it. Another poet might continue the sequence with still another fourteen-syllable verse linked to the preceding seventeen-syllable verse, and so on, forming a sequence of ten, twenty, and thirty or more verses (called *kusari renga*, or "chains of linked verse") of seventeen and fourteen syllables in alternation. Each added verse came to be called a *tsukeku* (linked verse), and the verse to which it was linked was called the *maeku* (preceding verse). Such sequences did not form a complete poem, since each tsukeku might make sense only as a response to its maeku, not to any of the verses before that. In fact, when the rules of renga were later codified, they included provisions to ensure that each successive link, and not the cumulative sequence, was the locus of meaning, thus ensuring constant change and variety.

Scattered examples of *tan-renga* appear in such early Japanese works as *The Tales of Yamato* (ca. 951), as well as in the imperial waka anthologies of the

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Heian period. Poets of the eleventh and twelfth centuries began creating extended sequences of ten or more verses, but it was not until the era of the *Shinkokinshū* (ca. 1205) that renga began to assume its eventual shape and significance in the canon of Japanese literary genres.

The poets of the *Shinkokinshū* era, the last two decades of the twelfth and the beginning of the thirteenth century, are remembered for their allusions (*honka-dori*) and word associations (*engo*) and for innovations that brought great intensity to the waka. These poets also perfected such forms as the hundred-poem sequence (*hyakushu uta*), the poem contest (*uta-awase*), and the imperial waka anthology, all of which were collaborative approaches to composition and compilation. It is not surprising, then, that they should have seen possibilities for innovation in the linked-verse form. Fujiwara no Teika (1162–1241) and his contemporaries were avid devotees of renga, and it was under their influence that the length of the sequence was fixed at one hundred verses, the formalities of the renga session were standardized, and certain conventions and rules—such as the obligatory inclusion of "moon" and "flower" verses at regular intervals in the sequence—were established. It was also during this period that linked verse began to gain popularity outside the court, from the capital to the provinces and from aristocrats to the middle classes of medieval society.

But Teika and his contemporaries only began the process by which linked verse came to be identified with court ideals in aesthetics and taste. The first renga poet of stature in the court world was Nijō Yoshimoto (1320–1388), who served as regent during the first years of the Ashikaga shogunate. Although Yoshimoto was a devoted poet of waka, he is remembered now mostly for his contributions to the development of linked verse. Under the guidance of his tutor, Gusai (also Kyūsei, 1284?–1376?), one of the earliest and finest semiprofessional renga masters, Yoshimoto brought a new measure of artistic integrity and credibility to renga. It was Yoshimoto who compiled the first large anthology of the genre, *Tsukuba Collection* (*Tsukubashū*, 1356), which was granted the status of a quasi-imperial anthology; and it was he who wrote the first important treatise on the genre, *Tsukuba Dialogue* (*Tsukuba mondō*, 1372). He and Gusai also were responsible for codifying the rules of the genre.

The rules of renga composition (*shikimoku*) have often been considered a stumbling block to understanding the genre. No matter how complicated they seem on the surface, however, the rules are fairly simple in conception and purpose. By establishing lexical and thematic categories, limiting repetition, and prescribing the degrees of intermission and seriation of words and images in those categories, they tried to bring balance and variety to the development of a hundred-verse sequence while enforcing the idea of constant change. The effect of the rules was to organize the vocabulary of the courtly waka tradition for use in linked verse. Yoshimoto himself saw linked verse as a courtly art, but one with features of design and organization that had no true precedent in the canon. Under the aestheticizing direction of Yoshimoto and Gusai, renga became

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a meditation on the past, constantly alluding to the canons of Japanese as well as Chinese literature. Yet the emphasis in linked verse was less on individual verses than on the links between them, less on isolated scenes and statements than on connection and variation.

In either its classical form (often called *ushin renga*) at court or its later unorthodox form (often called *mushin renga*) as haikai, renga remained a major poetic genre for centuries after Yoshimoto's death. The golden age of the classical form was the late Muromachi period, when professional poets such as Sōzei (d. 1455), Shinkei (1406–1475), and Sōgi (1421–1502) perfected both the linking technique at the level of the tsukeku (the link that is the fundamental unit of composition) and the *hyakuin* (hundred-verse sequence). Their personal anthologies and sequences, like *Three Poets at Yuyama* (*Yuyama sangin hyakuin*, 1488) and *Three Poets at Minase* (*Minase sangin hyakuin*, 1491), were read by poets for generations as quintessential realizations of the principles of renga, and they had a great influence on Matsuo Bashō (1644–1694) and many other haikai poets.

NIJŌ YOSHIMOTO

Nijō Yoshimoto (1320–1388) initially served Emperor GoDaigo, but after the imperial court separated into the Northern and Southern courts in 1336, he served the Northern Court, becoming regent four times. Yoshimoto was one of the most prominent political figures of his day, a friend and confidant of both emperors and shoguns. He also was one of the premier literati of the fourteenth century, known especially for his work in linked verse, which he helped establish as a legitimate genre in the courtly tradition. In addition to his poetry and poetic criticism, Yoshimoto left a travel diary and several scholarly works and is believed to be the author of *The Clear Mirror* (*Masukagami*), a historical tale.

Like most courtiers, Yoshimoto began studying waka in his youth. Although affiliated with the senior and more conservative poetic lineages, his status as the heir of a regental house and the descendant of both Kujō Yoshitsune (1169–1206) and Saionji Sanekane (1249–1322), both major poets in their own right, gave him a measure of independence from the prevailing partisan squabbles. This independence made it possible for him to maintain close relationships with members of the Nijō family (of a different lineage than his own) and the Reizei family, the dominant custodians of courtly waka traditions.

As a waka poet, Yoshimoto can only be characterized as a conventionalist. His work in the world of linked verse, as a critic, an anthologist, and a poet, was, however, more creative. Linked verse had not yet been claimed by any aristocratic lineage as its own *michi* (way), thus leaving it open to innovation. Yoshimoto was thus free to choose as his teacher a gifted master of the art, Gusai (Kyūsei), who was not a member of the aristocracy but a *jige* (commoner). For nearly a century, renga had been a popular form among commoners,

Bahan dengan hak cipta

mingle with adepts.[61] Whatever else you do, you will not improve without spending time with skilled poets. To compose only with unskilled poets is worse than doing nothing at all. Beginners especially must take care in this regard. For even the renga of an expert working in isolated seclusion will suffer in time. Devote yourself day and night to studying the styles of the adepts of the day, read their works, and take the words that they use for composing anew.[62] *Keiko* [practice] is nothing more than this: participating with masters and accumulating merit in the *za*. Beyond that, peruse the *Three Collections*,[63] *The Tales of Ise*, lists of famous places, and other such books and put them to use in interesting ways.

The beauty of language[64] is a matter of innate ability. But if from the beginning you practice making links that are offensive,[65] your language will grow coarse, whereas even someone without inborn skill can gain proper style by learning from elegant examples. A beginner should link elegantly, evenly, with a light touch, avoiding overly intricate verses, and smoothly, without brooding.

Beyond this, neither esoteric learning [*kojitsu*] nor secret transmissions [*kuden*] should have any place in renga. . . .[66]

The beginner should not agonize over verses while linking. "Go with your first thought," as the saying has it. Proceed with what comes to mind without worrying excessively—although in a session with strangers or many skilled poets one must be a little more on one's guard.

Even after one has become skillful, judging good from bad is a difficult matter. It happens often that you think a verse is not so good but that the judge[67] gives it high marks. And this means neither that the judge is no good nor that your own judgment is not sound; but that at just that moment, the verse touched the judge's heart.

This is true even of masters; so how much more likely that the inexperienced should have difficulty telling good from bad. Better to link with a light touch without mulling over the verses. This is not to advise making verses that fail to

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61. *Jōzu*.

62. This is a restatement of a famous assertion by Teika in *Kindai shūka*: "In diction, follow the old; in conception, seek out the new" (*Karonshū, nōgakuronshū*, NKBT 65:102).

63. *Sandaishū*, the first three imperial waka anthologies: *Kokinshū*, *Gosenshū*, and *Shūishū*.

64. The phrase is *kotoba no yūgen*. The term *yūgen* is not used here in the technical sense of "mystery and depth," but in its broader more colloquial sense as "superior aesthetic quality."

65. *Kowashi* (frightening, grating).

66. The art of waka was complicated by esoteric lore and secret traditions that effectively made it the possession of various court houses. Here Yoshimoto argues that linked verse should remain free from such fetters.

67. *Tenja* (literally, "marker"). In Yoshimoto's day, linked verse was often composed in competitions in which a judge awarded marks for outstanding links. The participant with the most marks in a session received a prize.

Bahan dengan hak cipta

50–51

toki no ma no	Spring's brief moment
haru ya mukashi ni	will soon be nothing more
narinuramu	than a thing of the past.
omokage kasumu	A misted apparition—
ariake no tsuki	the moon in the sky at dawn.[73]

Nijō Tameyo[74]

Autumn

384–385

hitosakebi naru	Calling out just once—
yama no musasabi	a mountain squirrel.
akatsuki no	In the light of dawn
hayashi no kozue	the moon sinks below
tsuki ochite	the tops of the trees.[75]

Nijō Yoshimoto

389–390

furinuru yakata	At an aging stronghold,
aki mo shirarezu	autumn is no longer known.
nushi mo naki	With no master now,
ura no sutebune	a skiff lies abandoned on the shore,
tsuki nosete	bearing the moon.[76]

Gusai

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73. The first verse seems to ask for context: a scene describing the impending summer, perhaps, or an explanation of why spring's moment is so brief. In the tsukeku, Tameyo uses an allusion to a poem by Ariwara no Narihira in the *Kokinshū* (no. 747). See also the section on *The Tales of Ise*. Narihira composed his poem when he went to visit the place where he had met a lover—now kept from him by her family—the previous spring. While the moon and spring appear to be the same, all has changed except his feeling for the love now denied him. In the link, the moon, surrounded by spring mist, reminds him that all experience is continually moving into the past, available only as memory.

74. Fujiwara no Tameyo (1250–1338), the eldest son of Fujiwara no Tameuji and head of the senior lineage descending from Fujiwara no Tameie.

75. The link responds to an aural image in the maeku with a visual image. Alerted by the sound of a mountain squirrel calling out, the speaker looks out to the treetops to see the moon through the branches, just before it sets.

76. By itself, the first verse means that an aging stronghold is already so forlorn a place that the sadness of autumn does not affect it. The tsukeku reemphasizes the theme by adding an abandoned boat near the stronghold. "Bearing the moon" implies that water in the bottom of the boat shows the reflection of the moon.

Bahan dengan hak cipta

Buddhism

639–640

Kisaragi nareba	The Second Month comes around—
saekaeru sora	with clear and chilly skies.
na o nokosu	In the Grove of Cranes
Tsuru no Hayashi no	that place so renowned—
ki wa karete	just withered trees.[81]

Gusai

Love

794–795

nokiba ni kakaru	Hanging from the eaves—
sasagani no ito	strands of a spider's web.
hitosuji ni	I will cling
kubeki yoi to ya	to that one last thread of hope
tanomuran	that tonight he will come.[82]

Fujiwara no Tameuji[83]

838–839

kawarubeki	Later on, of course,
nochi no kokoro wa	feelings are bound to change—
isa shirazu	but how can one know?
hitoyo nari to mo	If we have just one night,
omoide no yume	it will be a dream to remember.[84]

Nijō Yoshimoto

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81. The maeku presents a chilly landscape in early spring. The link provides a specific historical context, the death of the historical Buddha, which, according to tradition, took place on the fifteenth day of the Second Month. When he died, all the trees in Crane Grove, the site of his demise, withered, as if stricken with the cold of lingering winter, the link suggests.

82. It was popularly believed that the touch of a dangling spider's thread on one's robe was a sign that one's lover would visit. Here the speaker alludes to a poem in the *Kokinshū* (no. 1110) in which the consort of an emperor sees a spider's thread and knows "that tonight he will come" (*kubeki koyoi nari*).

83. Tameuji (1222–1286), son of Fujiwara no Tameie and head of the senior lineage descending from Tameie, Teika's son.

84. The maeku is a statement on the nature of passion. The link moves from the general to a specific night and embraces the fragility of passion: even if they part, lovers will have their memories.

Bahan dengan hak cipta

Hokku

Spring

2066

From a renga composed beneath the cherry trees.

hana ni kite I came to see blossoms,
yuki ni wasururu and in the snowfall forgot
ieji kana the way home.[89]

Jūbutsu[90]

Summer

2100

Written for a hundred-poem sequence composed at the spring at his house.

mizu o seki Dam up the water
tsuki o tataete to make lodging for moonlight,
natsu mo nashi summer is no more.[91]

Nijō Yoshimoto

[Introduction and translations by Steven Carter]

STORIES OF TEMPLE-SHRINE ORIGINS (*ENGI-MONO*)

In the fourteenth century, the *engi-mono* (story of origins), a new type of *setsuwa*, appeared, foreshadowing the Muromachi-period *otogi-zōshi* (Muromachi tale). Engi-mono describe the origins and benefits of a particular Japanese god (*kami*) or buddha worshiped by a temple or shrine complex. Although they sometimes were produced by the patrons or worshipers of a kami or buddha and composed as an offering, they usually were produced by Buddhist priests who used various sources to re-create the history of the shrine-temple and to advertise the powers

89. Yoshimoto and Gusai labored to elevate linked verse from its popular form as a competitive game of composition beneath the cherry blossoms in spring (*hana no moto*). But in *Tsukubashū*, they included verses that allude to the popular tradition. Here the speaker complains that falling blossoms have so obscured the path that he cannot find the way home.

90. Jūbutsu was a physician-literatus in service to the Ashikaga shogunate.

91. Water is, of course, the antidote to summer's heat. Here Yoshimoto suggests that looking at the cool moonlight reflected on the water of a spring makes one feel as if summer is over and autumn has arrived.

Sách có bản quyền

of the kami or buddha enshrined there. Almost all engi-mono were preserved as illustrated scrolls (*emaki-mono*), a good example being "The Avatars of Kumano" (Kumano gongen no koto), in the *Shintōshū* (*Collection of the Way of the Gods*), an engi-mono about the origin of the kami at Kumano Shrine.

Shōdō (Buddhist preaching) was an important function of several medieval genres: military chronicles (*gunki monogatari*), anecdote collections (*setsuwa-shū*), *otogi-zōshi* (Muromachi tale), nō, and *kōwakamai* (military-musical drama). Buddhist preaching was introduced in the ancient period, under the *ritsuryō* (law code) and regency systems, when the temples received the support of state and aristocratic patrons. The audience for preaching at that time, however, consisted of elite groups: the imperial family, the aristocracy, and the intelligentsia. As the ritsuryō and regency systems deteriorated and Pure Land Buddhism (aimed at commoners) became popular, even those temples belonging to the earlier Buddhist sects turned to new methods and sources of preaching in order to attract a new audience of commoners.

The new methods centered on storytelling, performed by a storyteller or an *etoki* (picture storyteller), who used a pictorial narrative. The new types of narratives used by storytellers included biographies of founding priests; engi-mono, which described the miraculous events that had led to the establishment of a specific temple or shrine; and *honji-mono* (story of divine origins), which often related the difficulties endured by a kami during an earlier, human existence. The engi-mono sometimes were displayed in the form of picture scrolls, which were used to raise money (*kanjin*) for the temple. During the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, many picture scrolls depicting the origins of temples as well as biographical picture scrolls of notable priests were produced. Beginning in the latter half of the thirteenth century, the temples themselves became directly involved in producing these picture scrolls. The etoki would tell the story of the painting, often adding a musical element to make it a multimedia event.

COLLECTION OF THE WAY OF THE GODS
(*SHINTŌSHŪ*, CA. 1360)

The *Collection of the Way of the Gods* is a compilation of setsuwa edited during the Northern and Southern Courts period, probably in the 1350s and 1360s. The collection consists of fifty stories divided into ten books. The authorship remains unclear, although the text suggests that the editor was a Buddhist preacher belonging to the Agui school of the Tendai sect of Buddhism. Books 1 and 5 of the *Shintōshū* reveal the fusion of Shinto and Buddhist thought, particularly between Ise Shinto and Tendai Buddhism, which provided the foundation for medieval Shinto theology. Today Shinto shrines and Buddhist temples are separate institutions, but in the medieval period the distinction between them was far less clear, since it was thought that the buddhas and bodhisattvas, who had originated in India (Tenjiku), appeared in Japan not only in

Sách có bản quyền

were manifested even in the mortal world, the consort wept unceasingly in her bedchamber.

The consort thought to herself, "This is not something for which I should blame other people or this world; it is a fate resulting from actions in a previous existence." Sorrowfully she worshiped a three-foot-tall image of the Thousand-Armed Kannon. The blessings of Kannon were present in this world even then, so when the consort prayed to the image, her body, just as it was, without undergoing rebirth, exhibited the thirty-two aspects and the eighty marks of a great being[94] and became a purple-tinged golden color. Light shone out from her body, and the inside of the palace sparkled in its glow.

Since this was a sign from the Buddha, the king turned his thoughts exclusively to that palace and made a journey there. Seeing the consort's body, he cried, "Is this a dream? Is this real?" The consort said, weeping and weeping, "For endless years you did not come. I devoted myself to praying to the Buddha." Hearing this, the king pressed the sleeve of his robe to his face and wept. From that time onward the king thought only of this consort, and his other consorts were forgotten like a dream.

What a scene it was when the other nine hundred and ninety-nine consorts gathered to discuss this turn of events! The sinfulness of the thoughts of one person is frightful enough; the thoughts of nine hundred and ninety-nine people are fearsome beyond words. Saying to themselves that "a few can never overcome the many," the consorts plotted and schemed as to what to do next.

The king thought, "If possible, I should like this consort to bear me a child, be it a prince or a princess." The king as yet had no children, and lamenting this, he prayed to the Buddha for a child. In time there were signs that his prayers had been answered, as Lady Gosuiden became pregnant.

Hearing this news, the other consorts conferred with one another. "This is not something about which we can be complacent. Even a relationship that is not particularly close can be made affectionate by the birth of a child. And in this case in particular, if the consort bears a prince or princess, of which there have been none so far, then the rest of us will be abandoned forever. What shall we do?" they said, each weeping and lamenting. Seemingly overjoyed at the pregnancy of the consort in the west, they went before the king, saying, "Your consort has been favored with pregnancy. Whether the child be a prince or a princess, all nine hundred and ninety-nine of us shall take great care of it. Could anything be more wonderful?" Even as they said this, the flames of jealousy threatened to blaze up in their hearts. Were their jealousy water, it would have been leaking out invisibly. Thus it is that the Flower Garland Sutra says,

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94. The thirty-two signs of a great being (*mahapurusalaksana*) and the eighty marks of a great being (*anuvyanjana*), exhibited by buddhas and bodhisattvas. In medieval Japan, this phrase had come to be used as a conventional description for physical beauty.

Sách có bản quyền

"Women are the messengers of hell and often obstruct the path to buddhahood;[95] they have the face of a bodhisattva, but their innermost heart is that of a demon." Thinking that their feelings were genuine, the king agreed, saying, "Yes, yes, excellent!"

The nine hundred and ninety-nine consorts gathered in the first to seventh palaces, lamenting to one another, "What shall we do?" Wanting to know the fortunes of the child about to be born, they summoned a physiognomist and questioned him. "Is the child to be born of the Bodhisattva Lady[96] a prince or a princess? Tell us of the fate of this child, for it makes us most uneasy." The physiognomist opened his books and made his prognostication: "The unborn child is a prince, and he shall live eight thousand, five hundred years. He will bring peace to the land, and in his reign the people shall live in freedom. He will be a king who brings much pleasure to his people."

At this the consorts wrung their hands so furiously that it seemed they would burst into flame. They said to the physiognomist, "When you speak of this child before His Majesty, say exactly what we tell you to say. If you do so, your reward will be all that you could possibly hope for. Say that on the seventh day after birth, this child will become a demon with nine feet and eight faces and flames coming from its body, and it will destroy with fire everything in the world, starting with the capital. This demon's body will be of three colors; it will be at least six hundred feet tall, and it is sure to devour His Majesty." They instructed him further: "Say that from the Land of the Ogress will come ninety-nine hundred million demon kings, who will raise up a hurricane and let loose a great flood, so that everything in the world will be washed into the sea." With this, they bestowed great rewards on the physiognomist, each according to her position giving him five hundred or a thousand pieces of gold; they also gave him great quantities of patterned silk and brocade. The physiognomist was overjoyed and replied, "I agree." The consorts cautioned him, "This must remain our secret." "Why would I argue with that?" said the physiognomist and left.

One day the consorts went to the royal palace and said to the king, "We would like to know whether the consort is pregnant with a prince or a princess. Please summon a physiognomist and consult him about it. This is something about which we feel very strongly." "So be it," said the king, and summoned the aforementioned physiognomist. Having previously given the physiognomist

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95. Literally, "they often sever the seeds of the Law"; the "seeds" (*shūji*, Skt. *bija*) of the dharma that when activated produce the manifestations perceived by the unenlightened as the external world.

96. Referring to the consort Gosuiden.

Sách có bản quyền

Kannon, please listen to my prayer with compassion, and let me give birth. Even though this life is ending, please welcome me to paradise in the next." With that she just wept.

The soldiers said, "Don't argue. Since time is passing, we will execute you shortly." Among the soldiers was one called Kinzai, who said, "The consort's wish is that her prayers are heard in the realm of the worlds of light and darkness, of the Three Treasures, of the power of oneself and the power of the other.[101] Let us wait for a while." A soldier named Tosafu drew his sword and approached the consort, saying, "Time is passing—let us execute her." Seeing this, the consort cried, "Please wait a while!" Hearing this, a soldier called Kinka said, "Wait a while."

While they were waiting, the consort read the Thousand-Armed Sutra,[102] after which she showed signs that parturition was near. About an hour later she gave birth. Even though the term of pregnancy had been only five months, the child was a prince as perfect as a jewel, lacking none of the six sense organs[103] or the five bodily elements.[104] "If you kill him before his first bath, it will be a great sin," said the consort. The soldier Tosafu felt pity and brought water from the valley stream, which the consort warmed in her mouth and used to anoint the child.

In misery, she held the child close. Even though this was a mother and child about to be parted forever, it is inevitable that a mother should hold dear her child. After all, being only human, the soldiers felt pity for the consort. The consort filled the prince's mouth with milk, held him to her bosom, and faced toward the west. Joining her palms in prayer, she said, "I have no regrets. Do it quickly, quickly!" When they saw the prince's face, the soldiers could only weep. The prince gazed at them. However, Tosafu drew his sword and approached the consort from behind; her head dropped forward, and her body toppled over, still embracing the prince. Afterward, the soldiers returned. When they gave their report of what had happened, the joy of the remaining consorts knew no bounds.

The prince clung and suckled at his mother's breasts in vain, knowing nothing of what had transpired. When people heard this, even those who did not have parents or children themselves wrung out their sleeves.

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101. *Myōgen sanbō jita no kyōgai*. *Myōgen* (light and darkness) refers to this world and the netherworld; the Three Treasures are the Buddha, the Buddhist law, and the priesthood; *jita* (self and other) refers to *jiriki* (achieving enlightenment through one's own efforts) and *tariki* (achieving enlightenment through the power of the other [Amida]).

102. *Senjukyō*, also known as the *Senju darani* (*Thousand-Armed Incantation*), a text extolling the virtues of Thousand-Armed Kannon, who is identified elsewhere in the text as the original ground of Gosuiden as a Kumano avatar.

103. *Rokkon*, the six sense organs of sight, hearing, smell, taste, touch, and intellect.

104. *Gotai*, the five bodily elements of sinew, blood vessels, muscle, bone, and skin. The term can also refer to the head, both hands, and both feet.

Sách có bản quyền

There was much blood strewn about, and at dusk on the evening of that day twelve tigers caught the scent of blood from either the birth or the beheading and joyfully approached. They had intended to tear apart and devour the corpse, but when they saw the prince suckling at his mother's breasts they were overcome with pity and spent the night standing guard over him rather than devouring his mother. The same twelve tigers returned to guard the prince the following night, so that he was not eaten by other tigers.

The tigers stood guard over the prince not just for one day and night, but for three years, until the third anniversary of his birth. On that day, at the exact time when he had been born three years before, his mother's body turned to water and vanished. Still taking pity on him, the twelve tigers gathered the juice of the *nindō* vine, a flower growing on that mountain, and fed it to the prince, who eventually turned four. Why did Prince Satta entrust his body to the tiger? That tiger showed no mercy and ate him, as one might expect.[105] Prince Satta had come to fulfill his practices as a bodhisattva and wished to achieve Buddhahood through his act. Now it seemed that this prince born to Lady Gosuiden was being protected by Kannon of the thousand arms and thousand eyes. Of all frightening things, there are none to equal the tiger, wolf, and fox, and thus it was no ordinary thing for tigers to be keeping watch over the prince.

Thirty leagues away in the mountains, a sage called Kiken lived in a place called Mount Onshō. He lived in reclusion on this mountain carrying out Buddhist practices. Six times every day and night, without fail, he would recite the Lotus Sutra. He had reached one thousand, seven hundred years of age. One day, as he was reading the "Medicine King" chapter of the Lotus Sutra,[106] a curious thing happened: a spider spun its web into letters reading, "In Demon-Time Valley, the son of King Zenzai is being reared by twelve tigers. Take the child and present him to the king." Realizing that this was a plan by the Ten Demon Women,[107] Kiken hurriedly rolled up his sutra and put it away, then went to Demon-Time Valley to investigate for himself. When he got there, he saw the prince closely surrounded by the twelve tigers, amusing himself by taking hold of the heads and tails of the tigers to his left and right. The sage saw that the prince was splendid, a jewel among jewels. Picking up the prince, he turned to the tigers and said, "Tigers, listen! It was not my idea to come here; I am a messenger of the Ten Demon Women. You must not hurt me. Although you are wild beasts, you truly feel the virtue of the Ten Goodnesses.[108]

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105. A reference to the story of Prince Satta (Skt. Sattva), a previous incarnation of Shakyamuni, who offered his body as food for a starving tiger.

106. The twenty-third chapter of the Lotus Sutra, describing how the bodhisattva Medicine King (Bhaisajyaraja), in a previous existence, burned his own body as an offering to the Buddha.

107. Ten female demons (*rasetsu*, Skt. *raksasa*) who appear in the twenty-sixth chapter of the Lotus Sutra as protectors of adherents of the sutra.

108. *Jūzen*, the ten good acts, which when performed in one life bring virtue in the next.

Bahan dengan hak cipta

Gambar dengan hak cipta

Tigers taking care of the prince, who is depicted on the left and in the middle. Detail from the seventeenth-century *Kumano no hongi emaki* handscroll. Ink and color on paper. (By permission of the Mary and Jackson Burke Foundation. Photograph by Chris Burke)

Bahan dengan hak cipta

Even though the world has entered a degenerate age, still, this wonderful thing has happened. Thus, in accordance with the teachings of the bodhisattva Medicine King, I am taking the child with me." The twelve tigers understood and nodded in acceptance.

The sage took the prince in his arms, raised him for three years, and on his seventh birthday took him to the royal palace. Just at that time the king was on an excursion to Shanglin Garden.[109] The sage descended from the skies to Shanglin Garden, which the king found very strange and frightening. Without any explanation, the prince went and sat on the king's knee, and the sage described in detail the events of the prince's life. The king pressed his face to that of the prince and could do nothing but weep, saying, "Women have always been fearsome indeed. I cannot go back and face them again." He immediately summoned his swift golden carriage, and the three of them, king, prince, and sage, rode in it together. The king took out five swords and said: "I cannot decide myself where to go. I shall go wherever my swords fall." With that he hurled the swords northward.

The swords did not stop at the sixteen large countries, the five hundred medium-size countries, or the innumerable small countries scattered like grains of millet. Rather, they came to little Japan. The first sword stopped in Muro District in Kii Province, at the place known today as Kannokura. The second sword stopped at the peak of Hikone in Tsukushi.[110] The third sword stopped at Mount Nakamiya in Michinoku, the Deep North. The fourth sword stopped at Awaji.[111] The fifth sword stopped at Daisen in the province of Hōki.[112] The king's carriage followed the swords and came flying to Japan. First it arrived at the peak of Hikone, then went from one place to another until it had made an appearance at all five places where the swords had landed. Following the first sword, the carriage finally came to Muro District in Kii Province. Having arrived in this province, the carriage did not show itself again for seven thousand years.

Well now, the Kumano avatar appeared in the form of a bear eight feet tall at a place called Asuka Field, which came to be called "Kumano (Bear-field)."

In a place called Manago in Muro District lived a hunter called Chiyokane. Once when he was in pursuit of game, the path came to an end, and he could go no farther. At this point an enormous crow appeared. The hunter had wounded a large boar but did not have the strength to finish it off and did not know where it had gone. He searched for it, but without success. The enormous crow went before him, walking very quietly. When the hunter, thinking this

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109. J. Jōrin'en, a garden to the west of Chang-an, the Tang capital, founded by Shihuangdi, the first emperor of the Qin, and expanded by Wudi of the Western Han.

110. Hikone, an important *shugendō* center, is a mountain in Tsukushi (Kyushu).

111. An island province on the Inland Sea.

112. Daisen is a mountain in Hōki Province (now Tottori Prefecture), facing the Japan Sea.

Bahan dengan hak cipta

people revered the avatar and, through its strength, prospered and were joyful. Chiyokane became the superintendent of the shrines. The monarch at the time was the seventh emperor, Kōrei.[116]

The three Kumano avatars are those at the Shōjō Shrine, the Central Shrine, and the Western Shrine, respectively. The original ground of the deity of the Shōjō Shrine is the Buddha Amida, and the shrine is to none other than the sage Kiken of long ago. The Western Shrine is dedicated to the Lady Gosuiden, and its original ground is the Thousand-Armed Kannon. Accordingly, the vows made at the Shōjō Shrine are far superior to those of other gods. The vow made by the deity is as follows: "Until the dawn of my enlightenment through the eight stages of buddhahood in this world,[117] I shall not abandon any living being who has entered the Way of the Buddha." The vow of the Kumano avatar is: "Should anyone who visits my mountain, even once, later fall into one of the three evil worlds,[118] I shall seek out the sign and rescue them." At that time, "the sign" referred to the amulet[119] received upon visiting the shrine.

In the time of the tenth emperor, Sujin,[120] another shrine appeared to the left of the Shōjō Shrine. This shrine is to Prince Nyakuichi, son of King Zenzai. Also, the Central Shrine at Kumano is to King Zenzai of old. The remaining eighty-four shrines appeared during the reign of the eleventh emperor, Suinin.[121]

All the nine shrines appeared within the mountains. Altogether, there are twelve avatars. The princes, not counted in that number, guard the roads to the east and west.

The story of the Kumano avatars goes on to relate how the 999 other consorts followed King Zenzai to Kumano but were transformed into red ticks (akamushi) *and destined for rebirth in one of the "three evil worlds." The site of the Kumano avatar is then explicitly identified as the Diamond World* (kongōkai). *The narrative then embarks on a brief episode apparently unrelated to the story of the Kumano avatars, describing the fate of the cannibalistic sovereign Suizei (traditionally supposed to have reigned from 581 to 549* B.C.E.*), whose desperate ministers eventually sealed him in a cave in order to*

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116. Traditionally said to have reigned from 290 to 215 B.C.E.

117. *Hassō jōdō*. *Hassō* refers to the eight phases of the Buddha's life; *jōdō*, to the attainment of enlightenment, which is the stage particularly emphasized here.

118. The worlds of hell, hungry ghosts, and beasts.

119. *Hōin*, a design in the shape of a *hōshu* (Skt. *cintamani*), or wish-granting jewel, stamped onto paper amulets and the like and distributed at a shrine or temple. The reference here is particularly to the *goōhōin*, an amulet for casting out evil, which is distributed at Kumano and other sites such as Yasaka jinja and Tō-ji in Kyoto, Mount Kōya in Wakayama, and Hōryū-ji and Tōdai-ji in Nara.

120. Traditionally said to have reigned from 97 to 30 B.C.E.

121. Traditionally said to have reigned from 29 B.C.E. to 70 C.E.

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stop the carnage. The focus then shifts back to Kumano, and the narrative concludes with a description of the casting and subsequent history of the Naishidokoro, the sacred mirror that is one of the three imperial regalia. The Kumano avatar is finally identified as the foremost guardian deity of the Naishidokoro. The narrative thus ends with a reaffirmation of the Kumano avatar's power and prestige, gained through its relationship to sources of both divine (Buddhist and Shinto) and earthly authority.

[Translated by Anne Commons]

Bahan dengan hak cipta

and were patronized by and the favorite pastimes of powerful domain lords and shoguns. Otogi-zōshi (the narrative successor to monogatari and setsuwa) and *kouta* (little songs) were popular as well. Theories of art and drama became highly developed during the Muromachi period, with Zeami's (1363?–1443?) and Zenchiku's (1405?–1470?) treatises on nō drama, Shōtetsu's (1381–1459) treatise on waka, and Sōgi's (1421–1502) and Shinkei's (1406–1475) writings on renga. The short Azuchi–Momoyama period represents a transition to the Tokugawa or early modern period, in which *sekkyō-bushi* (sermon ballads) were popular and jōruri (puppet theater) and kabuki first appeared. In the late medieval period, haikai (popular linked verse) and renga (classical linked verse) found large audiences, and by the seventeenth century, haikai had become the most widely practiced literary genre in Japan. In 1549 the Jesuit order (Societas Jesu, J. Yasokai), which was founded in 1540, sent missionaries to Japan, and they brought with them Western culture and produced a romanized version of *Aesop's Fables*.

THE PATRONAGE OF THE ASHIKAGA

The Muromachi bakufu came of age with the third shogun, Ashikaga Yoshimitsu (r. 1368–1394), who unified the Northern and Southern imperial courts. Yoshimitsu was also a great patron of the arts and is especially remembered for the retreat that he built at Kitayama, north of the capital, and for the construction of the Kinkaku-ji (Golden Pavilion). The cultural efflorescence under Ashikaga Yoshimitsu and his son Ashikaga Yoshimochi, the fourth shogun (r. 1394–1423), is referred to as Kitayama culture. In the Muromachi period, both nō and kyōgen matured into major genres, particularly under the leadership of Zeami, whose patron was Yoshimitsu. Another notable period of cultural activity was the so-called Higashiyama period, in the latter half of the fifteenth century, primarily during the rule of Ashikaga Yoshimasa (1436–1490, r. 1449–1473), the eighth shogun. In 1483 he built a retreat at Higashiyama (the Ginkaku-ji, or Silver Pavilion), where he led an elegant life and supported nō drama, tea ceremony, flower arrangement, renga, and landscape gardening. Higashiyama culture, as it is called, is noted for its fusion of warrior, aristocratic, and Zen elements, particularly the notions of *wabi* and *sabi*, which found beauty and depth in minimalist, seemingly impoverished, material.

The origins of nō drama were the *sarugaku* (literally, "monkey/comic art") schools associated with shrines and temples (such as the Kasuga Shrine) in Ōmi and Yamato Provinces. The actors belonged to groups attached to private estate owners (*ryōshu*) and large temples and shrines in the Kinai region (Yamato, Yamashiro, Kawachi, Izumi, and Settsu Provinces). A number of nō plays are based on *engi-mono*, stories about the origins of local gods. During the Northern and Southern Courts period, when nō and kyōgen matured, Kan'ami (1333–1384) and Zeami were being patronized by the Ashikaga shogunal family, which stood at

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the apex of power. At that point, nō and kyōgen broke away from their earlier dependence on temples and shrines and from their function as religious performances supporting the private estate system. Of particular interest here is that in their mature phase, nō and kyōgen, which had developed in the provinces as commoner entertainment, now were the province of the Muromachi military government, situated in the capital, which was actively absorbing the court culture. At this time, nō reflected Heian court culture and aesthetics and developed the aesthetics of *yūgen* (mystery and depth), which included evocations of the classical past. Characteristic of this phase of nō was the woman play (*katsura mono*), including plays about characters from *The Tales of Ise* and *The Tale of Genji*. Despite first taking shape in the provinces and outside the central spheres of power, nō now was helping enforce the authority of the center, of the Muromachi bakufu, and of the revival of imperial court culture.

ZEN AND SAMURAI CULTURE

From the latter half of the thirteenth century and peaking in the fourteenth century, Song and Yuan Zen culture was imported into the world of the shrines and temples in both Kamakura and Kyoto. Zen Buddhism influenced such art forms as dry stone gardens (*karesansui*), monochromatic ink-painting, Chinese poetry (kanshi), and tea ceremony. Using the Chinese cultural forms that the Zen institutions had imported, the temples and shrines created a new culture distinct from that established by the Heian court aristocrats.

Likewise, samurai culture used Zen culture to transform itself. Until the thirteenth century—despite the outstanding samurai waka poets like Minamoto Sanetomo (1192–1219); the third Kamakura shogun (r. 1203–1219), who produced the *Poetry Collection of the Minister from Kamakura* (*Kinkaishū*), in a neo-*Man'yōshū* style; and the bakufu rituals imitating those of the Kyoto nobility—they all remained within the framework of aristocratic culture. Then, beginning in the latter half of the thirteenth century, when the bakufu had as much authority as the imperial court, the samurai slowly began to produce their own culture, particularly through the medium of Zen. The bakufu invited Zen intellectual leaders to Kamakura, and under its patronage the Zen priests imported texts and utensils from Song and Yuan China. After the Northern and Southern Courts period, this Zen-inspired samurai culture developed rapidly, creating a distinctive culture that was more than merely an imitation of Zen culture.

THE RISE OF PROVINCIAL CULTURE

One of the main characteristics of the late medieval period is that the various genres that had originated in Heian court culture—the imperial anthologies of

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Japanese poetry (*chokusenshū*), the vernacular court tales (monogatari), and women's court diaries (*nikki*)—and that had continued to flourish in the Kamakura period, almost completely died out. The editing and collecting of setsuwa (anecdotes), which were popular in the late Heian and Kamakura periods, also ended with the compilation of the *Records of Three Countries* (*Sangoku denki*), in the first half of the fifteenth century.

Perhaps one of the most salient characteristics of the Muromachi culture was its focus on commoner life and values in the provinces. In the late Heian period, setsuwa collections such as the *Tales of Times Now Past* (*Konjaku monogatari shū*, ca. 1120) provided a window onto life in the provinces, but the values remained largely those of the capital and the aristocracy. But in the late medieval period, the perspectives of the provinces and of the commoners formed a counterbalance to those of the capital and aristocrats.

At the beginning of the medieval period, the establishment of the bakufu, the seat of the military government, in the east in Kamakura, far from the capital, had a great impact on medieval culture. Although cultural activity continued to be centered in Kyoto, a new community of intellectuals gathered in Kamakura, making it a separate cultural center. The spread of culture outside the capital increased dramatically during the Warring States period (1467–1573). The Ōnin war (1467–1477), which arose over an inheritance issue involving the Ashikaga shogun and which pitted daimyō (military lords) from the west against those in the east, took place mainly in Kyoto and destroyed the city, leading aristocrats and cultural figures to flee to the provinces.

The rise of a new culture was closely related to the development of roads and travel, the reasons for which are various. Many people wanted to escape the ravages of war, and the aristocracy, particularly after being driven out of the capital during the Ōnin war, sought the patronage of wealthy provincial lords. Buddhist and Shinto followers frequently went on pilgrimages to shrines and temples, the most famous of which was the pilgrimage to Ise Shrine. Various religious groups—such as monks from Mount Kōya (*Kōya hijiri*), monks soliciting donations for temple building (*kanjin hijiri*), and nuns (*bikuni*)—also traveled, as did *biwa hōshi* (lute-playing minstrels), *etoki* (picture storytellers), nō actors, kyōgen players, and puppeteers (*tekugutsu*). Renga masters, who often were half layperson and half priest, also traveled to compose with different groups throughout the country, to give lessons on the Japanese classics, and to inspire their own poetry.

The culture of the capital was thus carried to the provinces while the culture of the provinces was brought to the capital, giving new life to both. This interaction of oral and written, aristocratic and commoner, led, particularly in the late medieval period, to the juxtaposition of the elegant, refined sensibility (*ushin*) and the common or popular (*mushin*), the serious and the comic, the elite and the popular—what in the Tokugawa period was called *ga* (high) and *zoku* (low). This dialectic is evident in the relationship of nō to kyōgen, and of

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books five through eight, Yoshitsune becomes, by contrast, a gentle and indecisive character, lacking mobility and judgment—probably to enhance his tragic, underdog quality—and the focus shifts to his vigorous retainers, particularly Benkei. In fact, in the Muromachi period, the stories about Benkei, who does not appear in *The Tales of the Heike*, were probably fused with those of Yoshitsune.

Book Three

Books one and two trace the birth and youth of Ushiwaka (Yoshitsune), who has been left to be raised at the Kurama Temple by Minamoto Yoshitomo, a loser in the Heiji rebellion. Ushiwaka is led to Ōshū, in the northeastern part of Honshū, where he defeats the bandit Kusasaka Chōhan. The following sequence describes the birth of his future retainer Musashibō Benkei (called Oniwaka as a child), the son of a Kumano abbot, who is sent to study at the Enryaku-ji temple on Mount Hiei, where he causes havoc. The sequence climaxes with Benkei's encounter with Yoshitsune, who is portrayed in these early books as a gentle, noble-looking, and seemingly inexperienced young man with hidden martial talents.

BENKEI'S BIRTH

The abbot, who had been greatly disturbed by the late arrival of his son, sent someone to the lying-in place to examine him.

"He is as big as most children of two or three. His hair covers his shoulders, and he has enormous teeth—molars, incisors, and all," reported the messenger.

"He must be a devil. He will be an enemy of Buddhism if we keep him. Tie him up and drown him, or crucify him deep in the mountains," directed the abbot.

"No matter what he may be, I have always been told that the bond between a parent and his child lasts for more than one life. How could anyone be so heartless as to kill his own baby?" lamented the mother.

Just then the abbot was visited by his younger sister, the wife of a man called Yamanoi. "What is so queer about the child?" she asked.

"The human gestation period is never less than nine months or more than ten, but this monster stayed in the womb for eighteen. He will be the destruction of his parents if he is spared. We cannot afford to be sentimental," replied the abbot.

"Parents don't need to fear a child just because his gestation period was long," said the baby's aunt. "Huang-shih of China stayed in the womb for eighty years and had snow-white hair when he was born. He was an odd, stunted, dark-faced man who lived for two hundred eighty years, but all the same he is worshiped as the divine messenger of the Great Bodhisattva Hachiman. Give me the boy to take back to the capital. If he turns out well I shall make a proper man of him for Yamanoi; if he proves troublesome he can be a monk."

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"Bishop's page or no, he has created a problem that affects us all," the monks said, meeting in council. Three hundred of them went off to wait upon the Retired Emperor.

"Get rid of the rascal as fast as you can," His Majesty commanded.

The monks returned to Mount Hiei in high spirits, but soon a council of nobles was convened, in the course of which an old diary was shown to contain the words, "An eccentric person will make his appearance on Mount Hiei sixty-one years from now, and there will be official prayers because of him. If he is disciplined by an ex-emperor's decree, the nation's fifty-four great imperial-vow temples[2] will vanish in a day." That year being the sixty-first, it was decided to let Oniwaka stay.

"So Oniwaka is more important than 3,000 monks! This is preposterous! Let us take out the sacred car of Sannō," said the monks. The court was able to quiet them only by presenting lands to the shrine.

In spite of the monks' efforts to keep all this from coming to Oniwaka's knowledge, someone must have been thoughtless enough to tell him. In his resentment he behaved even more outrageously than before, until the bishop despaired utterly of controlling him. "If he is here, all right; if he is not, that's all right too," he shrugged.

BENKEI'S DEPARTURE FROM ENRYAKU-JI TEMPLE

When Oniwaka learned that the bishop had turned against him, he left a Enryaku-ji Temple. "What's the use of staying at Mount Hiei if even my teacher dislikes me?" he said to himself. "I'll disappear somewhere. As things are now, wherever I go people will say, 'That's Oniwaka from Enryaku-ji Temple.' There's nothing wrong with my education. I'll make my way in the world as a monk." Seizing his razor and cassock, he ran to the bathroom of a man called Mimasaka-no-jibukyō, where he washed his hair in a tub and wielded the razor until the reflection of his head in the water was as round as a ball.

"I can't stop with this. I'll have to have a proper monk's name," he then determined.

Long ago Enryaku-ji Temple had harbored a wild monk known as Saitō Musashibō, who, it was said, had sat erect and achieved rebirth on his deathbed at the age of sixty-one, after a career of violence extending back to his twenty-first year. Hoping to become a great warrior by adopting the same name, Oniwaka resolved that he would be known in the future as Saitō Musashibō. For his true name he settled on Benkei, a combination of elements from the names of his father, the abbot Benshō, and his teacher, Kankei.

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2. Temples erected to fulfill vows sworn by emperors or empresses.

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HOW BENKEI BECAME YOSHITSUNE'S SWORN RETAINER

On the eighteenth of the Sixth Month, people from all around came flocking to Kiyomizu Kannon to worship. "That fellow I met last night is bound to turn up at Kiyomizu. I'll just have a look," Benkei said to himself. He loitered in the vicinity of the main gate, but Yoshitsune was nowhere to be seen.

It grew late, and Benkei was about to leave in disgust when he heard the strains of a flute floating up from Kiyomizu Hill.

"What an elegant air! It can't be anybody else," he thought. He remained where he was in front of the gate, praying, "This temple was dedicated by Sakanoue Tamaramaro to Kannon, the Enlightened One, who has vowed to remain in the world of men, deferring omniscience, until she has answered all the petitions of humanity in her thirty-three guises. She has also sworn to bring good fortune to everyone who enters the temple precincts. I don't ask for good luck. Simply allow me to take that sword."

Meanwhile Yoshitsune was beginning to feel inexplicably ill at ease. He glanced warily toward the top of the hill and saw that last night's monk was awaiting him, dressed in a corselet and armed with both a sword and a halberd. "The scoundrel! Here he is again tonight!" He continued to advance toward the gate.

"Well, if it isn't the gentleman I met at Tenjin last night!" said Benkei.

"It is," said Yoshitsune.

"Will you give me your sword or won't you?"

"You may ask as much as you like, but I'm not going to hand it over. If you want it, you'll have to come after it."

"Still boasting!" Benkei claimed. Waving his halberd, he charged down the hill, but Yoshitsune, with discouraging adroitness, parried the long blade. "I can't compete with him," Benkei was forced to admit to himself.

"Much as I should like to go on with this for the rest of the night," said Yoshitsune, "I have made a vow to Kannon." And he resumed his progress toward the temple. Benkei was left thinking, "I feel like a man who has lost something he was holding in his hand."

Yoshitsune was reflecting, "He is a brave man. If he's still there at dawn, I'll knock down his sword and halberd, wound him a bit, and capture him. It's no fun doing things all alone. I'll make him my retainer."

The unsuspecting Benkei followed along behind, still intent on the sword. As he entered the Kannon Hall, which was filled with the murmur of worshipers' voices, he heard someone beside the inner lattice reverently reciting the opening lines of the first chapter of the Lotus Sutra. "That's the voice of the fellow who called me a scoundrel. I'll just have a look," he thought. He laid his halberd on the threshold and, unarmed save for his sword, pushed rudely through the crowd inside, saying "I'm a temple official; make way, please." When he reached the position behind the chanting Yoshitsune, he planted

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himself with his legs wide apart. People who saw him in the light from the altar lamps said, "What a grim-looking monk! He's a giant!"

"How did he know I was here?" Yoshitsune wondered. To Benkei's surprise, he was now dressed as a woman, with a cloak over his head. Confused but determined, Benkei rapped him smartly in the side with his sheath. "Whether you're a page or a lady, I'm a worshiper too. Move over," he demanded. When Yoshitsune failed to reply, Benkei gave him a powerful shove, thinking, "This is no ordinary person. It must be my man."

"You pest!" exclaimed Yoshitsune. "A beggar like you can pray under a tree or a thatched roof; you'll be heard right enough. What do you mean by creating a disturbance where important people are worshiping? Get out!"

"That's an unfriendly thing to say to someone you've known since last night. Make room." While the spectators watched in shocked disapproval, Benkei jumped nimbly across two mats to Yoshitsune's side, snatched up the sutra, and flipped it open. "What a handsome sutra! Is it yours or somebody else's?" As Yoshitsune remained silent, he began to recite, saying, "Come, read it with me."

Benkei had been one of the most famous sutra readers in the Western Compound, and Yoshitsune had been well trained as a page at Kurama. As they read the first half of the second scroll in alternation, with Benkei taking the lead and Yoshitsune following, the noisy crowd of pilgrims grew still, and the devotees stopped ringing their bells. An indescribable aura of sanctity pervaded the quiet night.

After a time Yoshitsune arose, saying, "I must speak to an acquaintance. We shall meet again."

"If I can't hold onto a man while he's right in front of me, am I likely to see him again? Let's go together," said Benkei, pulling him by the hand. When they reached the south door, he continued, "I am in earnest about wanting your sword. Will you give it to me?"

"I can't do that; it's an heirloom," Yoshitsune replied.

"All right, then, let me win it from you in a fair match."

"Very well. We shall fight for it."

The two drew their swords and began to fence briskly.

"What's the meaning of this?" complained the spectators. "Imagine fighting in a cramped space like this—to say nothing of picking on a boy! Put away your sword, monk." Benkei ignored them.

When Yoshitsune threw off his outer cloak, revealing the blouse, knickers, and corselet beneath, the awed spectators knew that he was no ordinary person. Such was the excitement among the visiting ladies, nuns, and children that some of them fell off the veranda, while the men rushed to close the doors to the hall so as to keep the combatants outside.

Presently Yoshitsune and Benkei made their way down to the dance platform, without a break in their fighting. The spectators, who had at first been afraid

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to venture close, now began to walk around them in fascination, like people performing a circumambulation ritual.[4]

"Who will win, the page or the monk?" someone asked.

"The page can't lose. The monk's out of his class; he's tired already," replied someone else.

"It looks as if I am done for," thought Benkei, disheartened by this judgment, but he fought doggedly on. Suddenly, Yoshitsune seized a chance opening to run forward and thrust the point of his weapon into Benkei's left side below his arm. Then, as Benkei faltered, he struck him again and again with the back of his sword until he lay stretched out with his head toward the east.

"What do you say? Are you willing to follow me?" Yoshitsune demanded, planting a foot on the monk's prostrate body.

"This must be my karma from a previous existence. I will serve you," Benkei promised.

Yoshitsune put on Benkei's corselet over his own, took up both swords, and before daybreak had come, marched him to Yamashina, where he remained with him until the wound had healed. Then the two went to the capital to observe the activities of the Heike.

Once Benkei had become Yoshitsune's retainer, he followed him as faithfully as a shadow, performing innumerable gallant deeds during his master's three-year campaign against the Heike. He was that very Musashibō Benkei who remained with Yoshitsune to the end and fell beside him in the last battle at Koromogawa in Ōshū. . . .

Book Seven

After his victory over the Heike as a military commander, Yoshitsune is slandered by Kajiwara Kagetoki and hunted down by his suspicious elder brother Yoritomo, the Kamakura shogun. Yoshitsune escapes to Kyushu, then to the hills of Yoshino, where he parts from his lover Shizuka, and then proceeds to the Hokuriku (Japan Sea side) area with Benkei. Here Yoshitsune and his entourage are disguised as mountain priests as they desperately attempt to flee. In this famous scene, Benkei acts dramatically to save his master from detection.

HOW BENKEI FLOGGED YOSHITSUNE AT NYOI CROSSING

The next morning Yoshitsune and his men prepared to cross the river near Nyoi-no-jō.

"There's a little matter I must mention," said the ferryman, Hei Gon-no-kami. "The warden of Etchū lives near here. It's all right for me to pass three

4. A Buddhist ceremony in which chanting monks circle around a sacred image or hall.

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The victorious Benkei, hearing this, planted his halberd upside down on the ground, rocking with laughter. He stood there like one of the two Guardian Kings.[6]

"See how that monk keeps looking over here! He's getting ready to attack. There's something uncanny about his laugh. Don't get near him unless you want to be killed," the besiegers warned one another.

After an interval during which none of the enemy ventured to approach, someone spoke up. "I have heard it said that heroes sometimes die on their feet. Let someone go up and take a look." None of his comrades volunteered, but just then a mounted warrior came galloping past and the swish of wind caught Benkei, who had indeed been dead for some time. As he fell, he seemed to lunge forward, gripping his halberd. "Look out, here he comes again!" the warriors cried, retreating hastily. Only after he had remained motionless on the ground for some minutes was there an unseemly rush to his side.

In time, people realized that Benkei had stood like a statue to protect his lord from intrusion while he was committing suicide.

[Translated by Helen McCullough]

NŌ DRAMA

Nō drama consists of dance, song, and dialogue and is traditionally performed by an all-male cast. Sometime in the late Kamakura period (1192–1333), *sarugaku* (literally, "monkey/comic art"), a performance art that includes comic mime and skits, evolved into nō drama. Sarugaku troupes served at temples, and it is believed that their roles in religious rituals have been preserved in the oldest and most ritualistic piece in the current nō repertoire, *Okina* (literally, *Old Man*), in which the dances of deities celebrate and purify a world at peace.

By the mid-fourteenth century, nō had gained wide popularity and was performed not only by sarugaku but also by *dengaku* troupes. Dengaku had originally been a type of musical accompaniment to the planting of rice, but its troupes came to specialize in acrobatics and dance as well. In the late fourteenth century, a period of intense competition (among troupes and between sarugaku and dengaku), the Kanze troupe, a sarugaku troupe from Yamato Province (now Nara Prefecture), led first by Kan'ami (1333–1384) and later by his son Zeami (1363?–1443?), shaped the genre into what is seen on today's stage.

Kan'ami attracted audiences with his rare talent as a performer and a playwright. Among his innovations was the introduction of the *kusemai*, a popular genre combining song and dance, in which the dancing performer rhythmically chants a long narrative. By incorporating the rhythms of kusemai singing into

6. Statues of *niō*, two fierce deities, are frequently placed at temple gates.

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his troupe's performances, Kan'ami transformed the hitherto rather monotonous nō chanting into a more dramatic form, one that became very popular and was soon emulated by other sarugaku and dengaku troupes.

In 1374, Kan'ami's growing popularity finally inspired the seventeen-year-old Yoshimitsu (1358–1408, r. 1368–1394), the third Ashikaga shogun, to attend a performance by Kan'ami's troupe in Imagumano (in eastern Kyoto). From that time on, the young shogun became a fervent patron of Kan'ami's troupe. Yoshimitsu also was charmed by a beautiful boy actor, the twelve-year-old Zeami. Zeami soon began serving the shogun as his favorite page, mixing with court nobles and attending linked-poetry (renga) parties and other cultural events. After Kan'ami's death, however, Yoshimitsu's patronage shifted from Zeami, now a mature nō performer and the head of his own troupe, to Inuō (also known as Dōami, d. 1413), a performer in a sarugaku troupe from Ōmi Province (now Shiga Prefecture). Inuō had gained a reputation for his "heavenly maiden dance" (*tennyo-no-mai*), an elegant dance that was said to epitomize *yūgen*, a term signifying profound and refined beauty and the dominant aesthetic among upper social circles.

In order to maintain the shogun's favor, Zeami had to keep producing new plays and reforming his troupe's performing style in accordance with shifting aesthetic trends. Zeami's plays, of which he wrote nearly forty (or more than fifty, if his revisions of existing plays are included), are marked by exquisite phrasing and frequent allusions to Japanese classical texts. In addition, Zeami incorporated Inuō's elegant dance into his own plays, even though his troupe had originally specialized in wild demon plays and realistic mimicry. In an effort to adjust his troupe's performances to the principle of yūgen, Zeami created plays with elegant dances and refined versification, which poetically represented aristocratic characters often drawn from Heian monogatari. In his twenty or so theoretical treatises on nō, he also emphasized the importance of using yūgen in every aspect of nō.

Another of Zeami's innovations was the *mugen-nō* (dream play or phantasmal play), which typically consists of two acts. In the first, a traveler (often a traveling monk) meets a ghost, a plant spirit, or a deity, who, in the guise of a local commoner, recalls a famous episode that took place at that location, and in the second act, the ghost, spirit, or deity reappears in its original form in the monk's dream. The ghost usually recalls a crucial incident in its former life, an incident that is now causing attachment and obstructing its path to buddhahood. By reenacting that incident, the ghost seeks to gain enlightenment through the monk's prayers. The focus of these plays thus is less on the interaction between the characters than on the protagonist's emotional state.

Ashikaga Yoshinori (Yoshimitsu's son), who became the sixth Ashikaga shogun in 1429, favored Zeami's nephew On'ami, eventually placing him at the head of the Kanze troupe. With the loss of the shogun's patronage, Zeami's second son took the tonsure and left the theater. His elder son Motomasa, the

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Unlike the shite, waki always are living men. The characters subordinate to the waki, often their retainers or traveling companions, are called *waki-tsure* (or *waki-zure*). The *ai* or *ai-kyōgen* is a minor character in a nō play, such as a local villager, who might provide the waki, and thus the audience, with a relatively colloquial, prose recapitulation of what the shite has already recounted in poetry. In some plays, especially those written in the late Muromachi period, comical characters appear *during* the acts as, for example, in *Ataka*. These characters are also called *ai*.

The chorus consists of six to ten members who sit motionless throughout the play on the right side of the stage and do not have a specific role in the play. Sometimes they chant the words of one or another of the characters, and at other times they describe the scene. The main nō stage is a square about nineteen by nineteen feet. During a performance, the actors usually enter and exit the stage along the bridgeway (*hashigakari*) to the left. Nō never uses painted scenery or backdrops. The setting is depicted only verbally, and many plays have no stage props at all. Others have only a symbolic prop used for the most significant element of a play's setting. When placed on the bare stage, this prop attracts the audience's attention and becomes the play's focal point. The characters sometimes hold swords, rosaries, or willow boughs that signify that the holder is crazed (as with the mother in *Sumida River*). All performers carry fans, which are sometimes used as substitutes for other props, such as a writing brush, a saké flask, or a knife.

Most actors wear masks, although the waki and waki-tsure, who always portray living male characters, never do. A performer without a mask must never show any facial expression or use makeup; he is expected to use his own face as if it were a mask. Except for some masks that are made for specific characters (such as the shite's mask in *Kagekiyo*), most masks represent generic types. For example, *waka-onna* masks, which show a young female face, are used for both the female saltmaker in *Pining Wind* (*Matsukaze*) and Lady Rokujō in *Shrine in the Fields*.

Demon masks, with their ferocious faces and large, protruding eyes, express fierce supernatural power, while masks of human characters (including ghosts), whose feelings and emotions are often the focus of a play, usually display a static and rather neutral expression instead of a specific emotion. These masks are paradoxically said to be both "nonexpressive" and "limitlessly expressive," since the expression appears to change according to the angle of a performer's face. The actor's unchanging "face" also encourages audience members to project onto his mask the emotional content that they detect from the chanting. Interestingly, the nō masks are slightly smaller than the human faces they cover, revealing the tip of the performer's lower jaw and thus disrupting the audience's full immersion in dramatic illusion.

Nō costumes are famous for their splendor and exquisite beauty. Most are made of stiff, heavy materials that are folded around the performer's body like

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the chanting of the chorus appear in the *kuse* section and at the end of the play. The dance in the kuse section consists mostly of abstract movements. Because they do not have any fixed meanings, dances can be interpreted according to the general context or to that of the lines that accompany them, in much the same way that a single nō mask can project a broad range of emotions. By contrast, the dance at the end of the play usually includes many specifically representational movements that mimetically render the words of the text. Dances set to instrumental music generally are abstract as well and usually are similar in both movement and music. The same series of movements can appear in a rapid, exuberant "deity dance" (*kami-mai*), an elegant and gentle dance (*chū-no-mai*), or a tranquil and meditative dance (*jo-no-mai*), depending on the tempo and mood of otherwise very similar music. As with the masks, these dances, too, are generic. The same chū-no-mai, for example, is performed by a noble youth in *Atsumori* and by the female saltmaker in *Pining Wind*.

The chanting styles of nō are divided into speech (*kotoba*) and song (*fushi*), with the speech actually more intoned than spoken. Song can be further subdivided into "congruent song" (*hyōshi ai*), which is chanted in a steady rhythm, keeping precise time with the drums, and "noncongruent song" (*hyōshi awazu*), which incorporates prolonged grace notes into important phrases and is not chanted in measured time. There also are two modes of singing: a "dynamic mode" (*tsuyogin* or *gōgin*) and a "melodic mode" (*yowagin* or *wagin*). The dynamic mode is generally used for the roles of warriors and demons, and the melodic mode is reserved for female and elderly roles. In many plays, however, the same character may use both modes. For example, in *Kiyotsune*, even though the shite chants mainly in the dynamic mode, he frequently switches to the melodic mode (in segments indicated, for example, as *ge-no-ei*, *kakeai*, *jō-no-ei*, or *uta*) in order to convey two different aspects of the same character: warrior and loving husband.

Except for the preceding modes, which were introduced only after the Tokugawa period, the distinctions in chanting styles, as well as the rhythmic patterns and the degree of regularity of the syllabic meter, are necessary for distinguishing subsections (*shōdan*) of plays. In the following translations, the names of subsections are indicated in parentheses preceding the text. Each subsection has its own pattern of musical structure and/or content, which remains consistent from play to play. For example, the subsection called the *nanori* is a self-introduction by a character and is chanted mostly in the speech style, while a kuse is a congruent song with narrative elements that starts in a lower register and then moves to a higher one.

Instrumental music accompanies the dances and some of the chanting, as well as the entrance and exit of the characters. The music is provided by one flute and three different types of drums, each played by a single musician. With this dominance of percussion instruments, the music of nō consists more of silence than of sound. In fact, silence (*ma* ["interval" or "gap"]) is traditionally

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Congruent Song Styles

uta	song in regular 7/5 meter
age-uta	song sung in the upper and middle registers
sage-uta	song sung in the middle and low registers
dan-uta	song starting in the fashion of *age-uta* but developing into a different pattern
chū-noriji	song sung in vigorous *chū-nori* rhythm, in which each syllable matches a half beat; typically used in the ending scene of a warrior play
kiri	simple song sung in the middle register with almost no grace notes, at the end of a play
kuse	song with narrative elements, which starts in the low register and then moves to a higher one
noriji	song sung in *ōnori* rhythm, characterized by an especially steady, rhythmical beat, with each syllable lasting a whole beat
rongi	segment chanted alternately by characters (or a character and a chorus)
shidai	short song in regular meter, starting in the upper register and ending in the lower one

Subsections that do not fit the preceding categories are listed as "unnamed."

LADY AOI (*AOI NO UE*)

Anonymous, revised by Zeami

Lady Aoi is the oldest of the numerous nō plays that draw on *The Tale of Genji*. In the nō treatise *Conversations on Sarugaku* (*Sarugakudangi*), Zeami recalls watching the play performed by Inuō (d. 1413), a senior sarugaku performer from Ōmi Province. The text included here is probably Zeami's revision of a play that was originally written for Inuō's troupe.[7] Since the play still preserves what are regarded as basic characteristics of nō theater from Ōmi Province—such as a female demon as the protagonist and a struggle between a monk and a vengeful spirit—Zeami's contribution was probably rather minor and may have been largely limited to refinements in phrasing.

The play is based on a famous episode in *The Tale of Genji*, in the "Heartvine" (Aoi) chapter, in which the young Genji has an affair with Lady Rokujō, a widow of

7. Zeami lists the play's title in his treatise *Five Sounds* (*Go-on*), but without mentioning its author. Because Zeami refers in this treatise to the author whenever he mentions a play that is not his own, the extant version of *Lady Aoi* is most likely his revision.

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In the first act, the performer who plays Lady Rokujō wears a *deigan* mask, whose golden eyes indicate her repressed jealousy. In the second act, he wears a *hannya*, a mask of a woman with two horns and a wide mouth, signifying that her spirit has now been transfigured into a demon. On stage, Aoi herself is represented only by a folded kimono. This stage prop is said to have inspired William Butler Yeats, who used a similarly folded cloth to symbolize the well in his nō-inspired play *At the Hawk's Well*. The following translation is based on the current text of the Kanze school.

Characters in Order of Appearance

TERUHI, a shaman (*ko-omote* mask)	*tsure*
A COURTIER in the service of Emperor Suzaku	*waki-tsure*
VENGEFUL SPIRIT OF LADY ROKUJŌ in the form of a noblewoman (*deigan* mask)	*mae-shite*
A MESSENGER of the minister of the left	*ai*
THE HOLY MAN of Yokawa	*waki*
LADY ROKUJŌ as an evil spirit (*hannya* mask)	*nochi-shite*

Place: Mansion of the minister of the left in the capital

Act 1

Stage attendant places toward the front of the stage an embroidered kosode *kimono, which represents Lady Aoi on her sickbed. Teruhi, wearing a* ko-omote *mask, wig, gold-patterned underkimono, brocade outer kimono, and white wide-sleeved robe, and the Courtier, wearing a cavity cap, heavy silk kimono, lined hunting robe, and white wide divided skirt, appear, cross the bridgeway, and enter the stage. Teruhi sits at the waki spot, and the Courtier stands at the shite spot.*

COURTIER: (*nanori*) I am a courtier in the service of Emperor Suzaku.[8] The demon that has possessed Lady Aoi, daughter of the minister of the left, is intransigent. His Lordship has invited the most revered and eminent priests to perform secret and solemn rites of exorcism as well as cures. They have tried everything but to no avail. I have been ordered to call in Teruhi, a shaman, who is known far and wide for her skill in birch-bow divination. She will ascertain by the bow whether the evil spirit is that of a living or a dead person. I shall ask her.

Teruhi faces the kosode *kimono and, to* azusa *music, chants an incantation for calling forth an evil spirit.*

8. In *The Tale of Genji*, Suzaku is Genji's elder brother.

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You must journey;
Strive as you will, there is no escape.
What folly to be blind
To the frailty of this life,
Like the banana stalk without a core,
Like a bubble on the water![15]
Yesterday's flowers are today but a dream.[16]
How sad my fate!
Upon my sorrow others heap their spite.
Now, drawn by the birch bow's sound,
The ghost has come
To find a moment of respite.
(*sage-uta*) Ah, how shameful that even now
I should shun the eyes of others
As on that festive day.[17]
(*age-uta*) Though all night long I gaze upon the moon,
Though all night long I gaze upon the moon,
I, a phantom form, remain unseen by it.
Hence, by the birch bow's upper end,
I shall stand to tell of my sorrow,
I shall stand to tell of my sorrow. (*As if listening, steps forward.*)
(*unnamed*) From where does the sound of the birch bow come,
From where does the sound of the birch bow come?

TERUHI:

(*ge-no-ei*) Though by the mansion gate I stand,

ROKUJŌ:

As I have no form, people pass me by. (*Steps back and weeps.*)

TERUHI:

(*unnamed*) How strange! I see a gentle-born lady,
Though I know not who she is,
Riding in a decrepit cart,
And one who seems a waiting-maid,
Clutching the shaft of the ox-less cart
And weeping, bathed in tears.

---

spontaneous generation, without any apparent cause. These are the ancient Indian classifications for all sentient beings.

15. An allusion to a passage in the Vimalakirti Sutra (J. Yuima-kyō): "How should a bodhisattva regard sentient beings? Like . . . a cloud in the sky, like a bubble on the water . . . ; like the [frail] core of a plantain tree . . . —thus does a bodhisattva regard sentient beings."

16. An echo from Bo Juyi's line: "The glory of yesterday declines today."

17. Refers to the day of the incident involving Rokujō's cart.

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But as long as she lives in this world,
Her bond with the Shining Genji will never end—
The Shining Genji, more beautiful than a firefly
That flits across the marshland.

ROKUJŌ:

I shall be to him

CHORUS:

A stranger, as I was once,
And I shall pass away
Like a dewdrop on a mugwort leaf.
When I think of this,
How bitter I feel!
Our love is already an old tale,
Never to be revived even in a dream.
Yet all the while my longing grows
Until I am ashamed to see my love-torn self.
Standing by her pillow,
I shall place Lady Aoi
In my wrecked cart
(*Rokujō pulls the outer kimono over her and,*
stooping, withdraws to the stage-attendant position.)
And secretly carry her off,
And secretly carry her off.

Act 2

A Messenger of the minister of the left, wearing a striped kimono, sleeveless robe, and trailing divided skirt, is seated at the kyōgen *seat.*

COURTIER: (*mondō*) Is anyone here?

MESSENGER: I am at your service. (*Comes forward in front of the Courtier.*)

COURTIER: Lady Aoi, who is possessed by an evil spirit, is grievously ill. Go! Fetch the holy man of Yokawa.

MESSENGER (*returns to the shite spot*): (*unnamed*) I understood that Lady Aoi, though possessed by an evil spirit, was very much better. Now I am told that she is more ill than ever. Therefore I am ordered to go to Yokawa and bring the holy man back with me. I must make haste. (*Goes to the first pine and, turning toward the curtain, calls out.*) I have arrived. If you please, I wish to be announced.

The Holy Man, wearing a small round cap, brocade stole, heavy silk kimono, wide-sleeved robe, and wide white divided skirt and carrying a short sword and a rosary of diamond-shaped beads, appears and advances along the bridgeway, stopping at the third pine.

Material com direitos autorais

Imagem com direitos autorais

In act 2, the prayers of the Holy Man of Yokawa prevent Lady Rokujō's spirit, wearing a *hannya* mask, from harming Aoi (represented by a folded kimono). (From *Meiji-Period Nō Illustrations* by Tsukioka Kōgyo, in the Hōsei University Kōzan Bunko Collection)

CHORUS:
Daiitoku Myōō of the West,
ROKUJŌ:
Kongō-yasha Myōō
CHORUS:
Of the North,
ROKUJŌ:
The most Wise Fudō Myōō of the Center—[31]

31. Myōō (*vidyaraja* [wisdom kings]) are manifestations of the Great Sun Buddha. They assume features of terrible anger in order to quell the rebellious spirits of men and demons. The five mentioned here are especially venerated in Esoteric Buddhism. Gōzanze (Trailokya) Myōō sits in the east, has three faces and eight arms expressing great anger, and destroys the three vices of covetousness, anger, and folly. Gundari-yasha (Kundali-yaksa) Myōō sits in the south, has one face and eight arms, and destroys all angry spirits and devils. Daiitoku (Yamantaka) Myōō sits in the west; has six faces, six arms, and six feet; rides a great white ox; and carries various weapons in his hands to destroy all poisonous serpents and evil dragons. Kongō-yasha (Vajra-yaksa) Myōō sits in the north, enveloped in flames, has three faces and six arms, carries various weapons in his hands, and destroys all fierce *yaksa* (demons). Finally, the Great Holy One—that is, Fudō Myōō (Acalanatha, the Immovable One)—sits in the center, expressing great anger; he is in reality a form that Dainichi Nyorai (Mahavairocana Tathagata) takes in order to conquer all evil spirits. His right hand clasps a sword, which symbolizes the infinite wisdom of the Great Sun Buddha, and his left hand holds a lasso, which symbolizes the Buddha's supreme compassion. He stands on a rock, amid flames.

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CHORUS:

Namaku samanda basarada senda makaroshana sowatayauntara takamman![32]
Whoever hears my teaching
Shall gain profound wisdom;
Whoever knows my mind
Shall gain the purity of buddhahood.[33]

Rokujō, subdued, drops her staff and covers her ears.

ROKUJŌ:

(*unnamed*) How fearful is the chanting of the sutra!
My end at last has come.
Never again will this evil spirit come.

CHORUS:

(*kiri*) Hearing the voice of incantation,
Hearing the voice of incantation,
The demon's heart grows gentle. (*Rokujō rises, as if rid of her curse.*)
Forbearance and mercy incarnate,
The Bodhisattva comes to meet her.
She enters nirvana,
Released from the cycle of death and rebirth—Buddha be praised!
Released from the cycle of death and rebirth—Buddha be praised!

Rokujō goes to the shite spot, joins her hands in prayer, and stamps twice.

[Adapted from a translation by Gakujutsu shinkōkai]

STUPA KOMACHI (*SOTOBA KOMACHI*)

Attributed to Kan'ami and revised by Zeami

The image of Ono no Komachi as a flawlessly beautiful poet has prevailed for more than a thousand years. The *Kana* Preface to the *Kokinshū* (ca. 905) praises her as a successor to Sotoori-hime, a legendary princess of peerless beauty who was re-

32. A romanized transcription of a *dharani*, a passage of Sanskrit that, in Chinese and Japanese Buddhist sutras, is left untranslated because it would lose the mystical power of its sounds. This dharani is a formula for subduing evil spirits and is used in exorcism by a devotee of Fudō Myōō. A very rough translation might read: "Homage to all indestructible ones. Wrathful destroyer of evil, may you crush the evil demons within our hearts!"

33. The latter half of Fudō Myōō's vow, which was often cited by mountain ascetics in their prayers.

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for audiences' changing tastes. It was only after Zeami had established the basic aesthetic principles and structure of nō plays that the practice of revising the plays subsided.

Although Zeami revised all the extant plays by Kan'ami, they still retain characteristics of Kan'ami's style, such as the vivid and witty conversation and the realistic representation of dramatic story lines, which often include confrontations between characters. These characteristics, which can clearly be seen in *Stupa Komachi*, are in fact the remnants of sarugaku from Yamato Province. Later, Zeami attenuated these features through his reformation of nō, bringing it more in line with the principle of yūgen.

The play's antiquity is indicated also by Shōshō's possession of Komachi. In *Teachings on Style and the Flower* (*Fūshikaden*), Zeami classifies "derangement" (*monogurui*) into two types, one due to possession by a spirit or god and the other to an emotional crisis, usually precipitated by the loss of a lover or child. For female protagonists, Zeami recommends the latter type of derangement but rejects the former. He in fact wrote numerous nō plays that feature a distraught female protagonist seeking her lost child or lover, which became the standard for later generations of playwrights. Before Zeami, however, presumably many plays dealt with female characters whose derangement was caused by possession, but most were gradually omitted from the repertoire and eventually disappeared altogether. *Stupa Komachi* is a rare exception. With such diverse scenes, presented one after the other—the fiery and witty debate between the monks and Komachi, her bemoaning her lost beauty and current misery, her possession by Shōshō's spirit, and her reenactment of his one hundred nightly visits—the play remains one of the most popular in today's repertoire, even though only a few performers, of mature years and superior skill, are permitted to play this highly prized and prestigious role.

Characters in Order of Appearance

MONK	*waki*
COMPANION, also a monk	*wakitsure*
ONO NO KOMACHI, a poet, now a very old woman (*uba* mask)	*shite*

To shidai *music, enter slowly Monk with Companion. They stand side by side at the front of the stage and then face each other.*

MONK AND COMPANION:

(*shidai*) Mountains are but shallow hideaways;
mountains are but shallow hideaways; what hermitage
is deeper than the heart?

Monk faces forward.

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that grand abode among the clouds, built from myriad stones
upon the heights—
will surely pay no heed to such a wretch as I;
why then, there is no need for slinking, hidden
in the shadows of the trees
of the Tomb of Love[38]
at Toba, and the Autumn Hill,
and moonlit Katsura riverboat—(*Facing stage right, peers into the distance from under her wide sedge hat.*)
rowing it away, who can that be?
rowing it away, who can that be? (*Plants her walking stick before her, right hand atop the stick, left hand atop the right, and gazes into the distance.*)
(*tsuki-zerifu*) I am in such pain— (*Looks over at the stool.*) I think I'll just sit down and rest upon this moldering piece of wood.

Removes her sedge hat and, holding it in her hand, slowly makes her way to the stool and sits down on it. Monk and Companion stand up.

MONK: (*mondō*) Why, already the sun has set. We must hasten on our way. But look! that beggar there: surely that is a stupa she is sitting on.[39] Let us teach her the error of her ways and have her move away from it.
COMPANION: Yes, by all means.

Companion passes behind Komachi and moves toward the corner pillar so that the three characters form a triangle, with Komachi at its apex and Monk and Companion forming its base.

MONK: (*mondō*) How now, you beggar, there! That place where you are sitting—do you not know that you are profaning a stupa, the form of Buddha's body? Get up from there; go rest some other place!
KOMACHI (*to Monk*): Profane—the form of Buddha's body, you say! But I see no writing here, no carven image; it looks like just a moldering piece of wood to me.

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38. The Toba Tomb of Love (Toba no Koi-zuka) memorializes Lady Kesa (J. Kesa Gozen), a twelfth-century Heian noblewoman who sacrificed her own life to save those of her mother and husband.

39. The stupa on which Komachi is sitting would not be a full-size tower but, rather, a replica: either a small, sculpted wooden stupa or else a tall, slim wooden board meant to stand upright as a grave marker and typically carved into a stupa-like shape at the top. Either would typically have sacred Sanskrit characters carved or painted onto its surface. The stupa appears to have slid down into a leaning or fallen position.

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(*age-uta*) To this, the Buddha's
solemnly sworn vow of compassion,[52]
this expedient devised
for saving ignorant, deluded beings,
even a backward connection
can lead to enlightenment. (*She turns earnestly toward Monk.*)
—Thus she explains,
at which the monk cries,
Truly, an enlightened mendicant! (*As though unable to help himself, Monk falls back two or three steps, sinks to his knees, and deferentially lowers his forehead to the earth.*)
and lowering his forehead to the earth,
three times he makes obeisance,
whereupon:

KOMACHI:

I now feel stronger, so I shall make bold
to compose a frivolous verse:
(*ge-no-ei*) (*easily, in a low voice*) If we were in the heaven of
Supreme Bliss:
it would no doubt be a sin;
but here outside,
whatever can you be objecting to?[53]

Abruptly rising, she turns her back to Monk as though in annoyance and moves away several steps toward the base pillar.

CHORUS:

(*uta*) Presumptuous priest, who would
"teach me the error of my ways"!

1004]) and the Dharma-Treasure Platform Sutra of the Sixth Patriarch. A monk at the Zen temple where Huineng lived, who was thought to be the most advanced of the Fifth Patriarch's disciples, wrote the poem: " The body is the bodhi tree; the mind like a clear mirror-on-a-stand. Time and time again, diligently wipe it; do not let there be upon it any dust." In response, Huineng, a lowly disciple who was young and illiterate, dictated the following poem: "Bodhi, at its root, is not a tree; nor yet is mind a mirror-on-a-stand. Since from the start no single thing exists, from what surface could one wipe off any dust?" This led to the Fifth Patriarch's selecting Huineng as his dharma heir.

52. "This" refers to the stupa.

53. "Supreme Bliss" (J. Gokuraku), also known as the Western Pure Land, is the buddha-field of the Amida Buddha. The waka turns on a pun involving *soto wa* (outside) and *sotowa* (*sotoba* [stupa]).

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Presumptuous priest, who would
"teach me the error of my ways"!

MONK: (*unnamed*) (*to Komachi's back*) But what manner of person are you? Please tell us your name!

Komachi turns to face Monk.

KOMACHI: Embarrassing though it is, I shall tell you my name. (*Moves slowly to center stage and sits facing forward.*)
(*nanori-guri*) (*haughtily, yet sadly*) I am what has become of
Ono no Komachi,
daughter of Ono no Yoshizane,
governor of Dewa Province.

MONK AND COMPANION:
(*sashi*) My heart goes out to her.
Komachi—ah, truly, long ago
she was a lady of surpassing beauty:
her visage like a flower, radiant,
her eyebrows two slim blue crescents,
her face invariably powdered white,
she had so many fine silk robes,
they overflowed her mansion.

KOMACHI:
Thus I remained absorbed in my appearance,

CHORUS:
and men far away ached for me,
while men close by were plunged in utter gloom;

KOMACHI:
and I, in robes whose turquoise breakers foamed
upon a cobalt coast,

CHORUS:
like sunset-painted clouds ringed round with cobalt peaks,

KOMACHI:
resplendent

CHORUS:
as a floating lotus blossom
lapped by daybreak waves,[54]

54. The preceding exchange between Komachi and the chorus appears only in the texts of the so-called Shimo-gakari schools (Konparu, Kongō, and Kita schools) of nō.

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KOMACHI (*slowly*):

Composing Japanese poems
and writing Chinese verse, . . .

CHORUS:

When she raised a cup of heady wine,
the stars and moon would tarry on her sleeves.
That peerless grace and beauty—
when was it so utterly transformed?
(*age-uta*) Her head's crowned with a frosted, drooping thatch,
and at her temples those once-lovely, flowing locks
cling limply to her skin in random streaks;
her gently curving brows, twin butterflies,
have lost their hue that was like distant hills.
(*sage-uta*) A year short of a hundred—ninety-nine—
oh, that the grief of these white, straggly locks
should have come to her one day![55]—
wan daylight moon: (*Komachi hides her face with her hat.*)
how mortifying her appearance now! (*She rises and moves toward the shite spot.*)
(*rongi*) The pouch that you have hung around your neck—
what do you have in it?

KOMACHI:

Although I know not whether life may end today,
to save me from hunger tomorrow I've brought along
some dried millet-and-beans inside this bag.

CHORUS:

And in the bag you carry on your back?

KOMACHI:

A garment soiled with dirt and grease.

CHORUS:

And in the basket in the crook of your arm?

KOMACHI:

Kuwai roots, both black and white.[56]

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55. Komachi's age is given as one hundred. However, this passage makes a pun on the fact that if the character *momo* (one hundred) were "one short"—that is, lacking its top brushstroke, which resembles the one-stroke character *hito* (one)—it would then not only be one short of a hundred but also now form the character *shiro* (white [hair]). This conceit underscores the retribution in which Komachi suffered through one year of increasingly onerous life for each of the ninety-nine nights to which she once subjected her suitor Fukakusa no Shōshō.

56. *Kuwai* roots, an edible rootstalk grown in rice paddies, were regarded as coarse fare, the kind of food an indigent might eat.

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Ah, how I long for her!
Ah, how I long for her!

MONK: "I long for her," you say? What manner of being is it, then, possesses you?

KOMACHI (*turning toward Monk*):

Of all the many men who staked their hearts on Komachi, (*Faces decisively forward.*)
the deepest love was that of Shii no Shōshō,
of Fukakusa's deep grasses;

CHORUS:

(*uta*) for Shii no Shōshō
the tally of love's grievances
rolls round again; (*Advances slightly, then stops, caught in the throes of attachment.*)
to her carriage-shaft bench
I must go courting![57] (*She looks off to the west, toward the bridgeway.*)
(*age-uta*) What time of day is it?—twilight.
With the moon as my companion,
I shall set out on the road to her.
Though there be barrier guards to block the way,[58]
I will not let that stop me; off I go. (*Goes to the stage-assistant position and turns her back to the audience.*)

(*Costume change*)

While monogi-ashirai *music is played, the actor playing Komachi lengthens his sleeves by lowering the shoulders of his outer robe; or he may exchange it for a* chōken *(man's overrobe). He then dons an* eboshi *(black-lacquered court hat), takes up a fan, and proceeds to the shite spot.*

KOMACHI (*looking down at her trouser hems and stamping once*):

(*uta*) Hitching up the legs of my white trousers,[59]

(*Quasi dance*: iroe)

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57. A carriage-shaft bench was a stool used for getting into and out of an ox-drawn carriage and also a stand on which to rest the shafts of the carriage. According to the tale on which this play is based, a man (Shōshō) is smitten by the charms of a woman (Komachi), but she rebuffs him, declaring that only after he has come and slept on her shaft bench for a hundred consecutive nights will she agree to see him. The man keeps a tally of the nights, each dawn recording his visit by leaving a new mark on the shaft bench.

58. Barrier guards (*sekimori*) were soldiers placed at strategic checkpoints along major thoroughfares to stop and inspect travelers.

59. The image of hitching up his clean white trousers (*hakama*) to keep them free of mud is of a young, elegant, manly figure.

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To musical accompaniment, she moves very slowly to the corner pillar, then circles left to back center and stops, facing forward. Although her movements have no meaning in themselves, the romantic ardor of the Shōshō as he makes his way to Komachi is perceptible. She continues dancing and miming as the text resumes.

KOMACHI:

Hitching up the legs of my white trousers,
folding down my tall court hat, (*Raises fan and points with it to her head.*)
and draping my robe's sleeve over my head,[60] (*Flips left sleeve over her head and half-hides her face with fan.*)
I make my way to her in stealth, avoiding the world's gaze,
going in bright moonlight or in darkness, (*Lowers her hands and faces forward, gazing up into the sky.*)
on rainy nights and windy nights,
when chilly autumn leaves come drizzling down,
and when the snow lies deep.
(*unnamed*) As from the eaves the jewel drops melt and patter
quick-quick-quick-quick (*Looks upward and around.*)

CHORUS:

(*uta*) go and then return, (*Komachi moves away two or three steps.*)
return, then go again: (*Bends the fingers of her left hand, counting.*)
one night, two nights, three nights, four,
seven nights, eight nights, nine nights—
to attend the harvest feast, the Light of Plenty,
I did not appear at court,
and yet neither did she appear to me—
at cockcrow, timely as the rooster with each dawn,
I inscribed the nightly count
upon the edge of her shaft bench.
I'd sworn to go to her a hundred nights; (*Stamps several times.*)
so came the ninety-ninth night. (*Extends her left hand and looks at her still unbent little finger.*)

Oh, agony! The world grows dark before my eyes. . . . (*Falls back to center stage, pressing her fan to her breast as though in pain.*)

A pain within my breast, he cried in sorrow, and,
not tarrying that one last night, so died (*Drops to one knee, then sits.*)

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60. The Shōshō throws his sleeve (which is extremely long and broad) over his head in order to hide his face. He folds his tall court hat over to one side to indicate the informal, private nature of his excursion.

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Bay, his place of exile—cannot be found anywhere else and was probably Zeami's own invention. Yukihira, a grandson of Emperor Heizei, was exiled to Suma for some unknown reason. One account of his life in exile, in an anthology of Buddhist anecdotes (setsuwa) entitled *Senjūshō*, recounts an episode in which Yukihira exchanged words with a local fisherperson (*ama*).[63] Although this account offers no hint of any love affair, certain romantic connotations are associated with fisherwomen in literature and legends, some of which depict a girl by the sea marrying a noble aristocrat and bearing his child.

The "Suma" chapter of *The Tale of Genji* links the image of Yukihira in Suma—a nobleman lamenting his exile to a desolate seashore—to the romantic portrayal of fisherwomen. Like Yukihira, Genji, in self-imposed exile, spends a period of time in Suma, after which he moves on to Akashi, a nearby coastal province. While there, he becomes involved with the Akashi lady, who likens her own status to that of rural girls working by the seashore. This lady, however, bears Genji his only daughter, a child who later becomes the mother of a crown prince, cementing Genji's political power and worldly glory. *Pining Wind* borrows from *Genji* this relationship between a noble exile and a local girl at the seacoast and re-creates it as a story about Yukihira, who stays in Suma for three years, has an affair with two local girls, and leaves behind his robe and court cap as keepsakes before making the journey back to the capital, just as Genji left his robe with Lady Akashi before his own return to the capital. The play is replete with citations from *Genji*, especially in its description of the Suma seashore.

According to one medieval linked-verse (renga) manual, the "Suma" chapter, which recounts Genji's sojourn at Suma, bears a close literary association (*yoriai*) with "The Wind in the Pines" chapter, in which the Akashi lady and her daughter finally move to the capital. According to another contemporaneous renga manual, wind in the pines is associated also with autumn rain, since both are representative autumn poetic topoi. At the same time, wind and rain allude to the goddess of Mount Wu in China, famously portrayed in a Chinese poem entitled "Ode to Gaotang." The goddess, who appears to Emperor Huai in a dream and sleeps with him, promises to manifest herself as "clouds in the morning and rain in the evening" on Mount Wu, which subsequently remains obscured by a mysterious haze. This tale, which suggests erotic beauty in hazy clouds and misty rain engulfing distant mountains, became a popular example of the concept of *yūgen* (mystery and depth). Through the association with the goddess of Mount Wu, the two sisters' names, Pining Wind and Autumn Rain, suggest that they, too, might be amorous incarnations of natural phenomena along the Suma coast.[64]

Another pair of natural images is implicitly erotic as well: the moon and the pails. The moon was sometimes a metaphor for a beautiful young man, and some popular

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63. *Ama*, translated here as "fisherperson," includes, besides saltmakers, divers who gather seaweed and shellfish.

64. This was the way the play was appreciated by Zeami's son-in-law Zenchiku (1405?–1470?) and Ikkyū Sōjun (1394–1481), a monk famous for his poems written in Chinese.

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leaves a green autumn.[71]
Ah, very moving!

And now that I have comforted them by chanting the sutra and by calling for them upon our Lord Amida, the sun—as it will on these short autumn days—has all too quickly set. That village below the hills is still a good way off. I will go instead to this salt-house and see the night through here.

Stage attendant places the brine wagon near the corner pillar: a small, light evocation of a wagon, with a pail on it and a long brocade "rope" to pull it by.

To shin-no-issei *music,*[72] *Autumn Rain enters and stops at the first pine. She is followed by Pining Wind, who stops at the third pine. Autumn Rain carries a second pail. Both are dressed in white robes over red trouser-skirts. They stand facing each other.*

PINING WIND AND AUTUMN RAIN:
(*issei*) A brine wagon wheels meagerly
our dreary world round and round:[73]
O sorry life!

They face the audience.

RAIN:
Waves here at our feet: on Suma shore

They face each other.

BOTH:
the very moon moistens a trailing sleeve.[74]

To ashirai *music, both come on stage. Autumn Rain stands at the center, Pining Wind in the shite spot.*

---

71. The pine that stands "in sign" of the sisters' memory "leaves a green autumn" because it alone remains green amid the red autumn foliage.

72. *Shin-no-issei* music, which is normally reserved for the entrance of the shite in a god play and which probably dates from about 1700, underscores the exceptional beauty and purity of the two sisters, who are dressed mainly in white.

73. *Kuruma* means both "wheel" and "wagon." These two lines evoke not only the drearily repetitious cycle of their daily labor but also their sufferings on the wheel of birth and death.

74. The sisters' sleeves are wet with the brine they gather, but even the moon moistens their sleeves because, seeing it, they recall the past and weep.

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(*shidai*) We of Suma, long familiar with fall,
we of Suma, long familiar with fall—
come, under the moon, let us draw brine!

Face audience.

WIND:
(*sashi*) Fall winds were blowing, to call forth sighs,[75]
and although the sea lay some way off,
Yukihira, the Middle Counselor,

Face each other.

BOTH:
sang of the breeze from Suma shore
blowing through the pass; and every night,
waves sound so near the saltmakers' home,
apart and lonely. On the way to the village,
besides the moon, there is no company.
WIND:
The sorry world's labors claim us,
and wholly wretched the seafolk's craft
BOTH:
that makes no way through life, a dream
where, bubbles of froth, we barely live,
our wagon affording us no safe haven:
we of the sea, whose grieving hearts
never leave these sleeves dry!

Face audience.

CHORUS:
(*sage-uta*) So thoroughly
this world of ours

---

75. This is the beginning of the *sashi-sageuta-ageuta* passage probably set to music by Kan'ami. The following passage draws on the "Suma" chapter of *The Tale of Genji*. At Suma, Genji lived in a house some way back from the sea. Finding the noise of the waves still very loud, he recalled a poem by Yukihira, who had preceded him at Suma and who (as *The Tale of Genji* suggests) had lived at the same spot. Since Yukihira had spoken in verse of the breeze from Suma shore blowing through the pass (over the hills along the beach), Genji realized that this breeze must stir up the waves. This *sashi* intimates that the two sisters (there was probably only one saltmaker in Kan'ami's piece) live roughly where Genji, and Yukihira before him, lived.

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WIND:

(*kakeai*) But come, let us draw brine!
At the sea's edge flood and ebb
clothe one in salt robes:

RAIN:

tie the sleeves across your shoulders

WIND:

to draw brine[78]—or so we wish,

RAIN:

yet no, try as we may,

WIND:

a woman's wagon

CHORUS:

(*age-uta*) rolled in, falls back, weak and weary, (*Autumn Rain goes to the back center. Pining Wind advances slightly, gazes after the cranes.*)
rolled in, falls back, weak and weary.[79]
Cranes start from the reeds with cries
while all four storm winds add their roar.[80]
The dark, the cold: how can they be endured? (*Pining Wind looks at the moon, then glances into the buckets on the brine wagon.*)
As night wears on, the moon shines so bright!
Now we draw the moon's reflections!
Salt-fire smoke—O do take care![81]
This is the way we of the sea
live through the gloom of fall. (*Kneels by the brine wagon.*)
(*sage-uta*) Pine Islands! where Ojima's seafolk,[82]
beneath the moon, (*With her fan, mimes drawing brine, then gazes at the moon's reflection in her pail.*)
draw reflections, ah, with keen delight
draw reflections, ah, with keen delight! (*To the shite spot.*)
(*rongi*) Far away they haul their brine[83]

---

78. The long, dangling sleeves had to be tied back in order to allow freedom of movement for work.

79. The two lines beginning with "a woman's wagon" also contain the fleeting image of a great "male wave" approaching the shore, only to recede, and this wave might conceivably point to Yukihira.

80. Storm winds from the four directions.

81. "Take care lest the smoke of the salt fires drift across the moon and hide it."

82. "Pine Islands" is Matsushima, a celebrated scenic spot on the northeast coast of Honshu, near the Shiogama mentioned later. The name Ojima is associated with Matsushima in poetry.

83. *Tōei*, the play from which Zeami transplanted this *rongi* passage, is set at Ashiya. In their aesthetic exaltation, Pining Wind and Autumn Rain play with fragments of poems that eulogize places associated with saltmaking.

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in Michinoku: though the name
is "near," Chika, where workers tend
the Shiogama salt-kilns.[84]

WIND:

And where the poor folk carried salt-wood:
Akogi beach, that was, and the tide withdrawing

CHORUS:

on down the same Ise coast lies Futami shore,
and its Paired Rocks: O I would pair
a past life in the world with one renewed![85]

WIND:

When pines stand misty in spring sun,
the sea-lanes seem to stretch away
past the tide-flats of Narumi,
Bay of the Sounding Sea.[86]

CHORUS:

Ah, Narumi, that was,
but here at Naruo,[87]
beneath the shadowing pines,
no moon ever shines to touch
the village huts roofed with rushes
at Ashinoya,[88]

WIND:

drawing brine from Nada seas
sorely burdens me with care
though none will tell, and I am come,
no boxwood comb in my hair,[89]

---

84. Michinoku is northern Honshū, where Matsushima and Shiogama are to be found. *Shiogama* means "salt kiln," and the name Chika, near Shiogama, resembles *chika*[*shi*], which means "near." Zeami developed the poetic value of Shiogama in his play *Tōru* and, to a lesser extent, in *Akoya no matsu* (no longer performed).

85. Akogi Beach is near the Grand Shrine of Ise, on Ise Bay. Just off Futami-ga-ura (Futami, or "Twice-See" Shore), also near the Ise Shrine, two tall rocks rise from the water. They are called the Husband-and-Wife Rocks, and a sacred straw rope encircles them. The "poor folk" carrying "salt wood" (wood to fuel the saltmakers' fires) on Akogi Beach recall several classical poems.

86. Narumi-gata is a spot on the coast near present-day Nagoya. Its name (if the characters used to write it are taken literally) means something like "Bay of the Sounding Sea."

87. Naruo, the name of which sounds like Narumi, is along the coast east of Suma.

88. Ashinoya (or Ashiya), literally "rush houses," is a well-known locality on the coast east of Suma, now between Kobe and Osaka.

89. The line "at Ashinoya" begins a five-line passage that is a variant of a poem in *The Tales of Ise*, episode 87. Nada is the name of the shore near Ashinoya. The passage puns elaborately

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CHORUS:

while in comb the rolling billows (*Autumn Rain places her pail on the brine wagon. Pining Wind gazes at it.*)
for us to draw brine, and look:
the moon is in my pail!

WIND:

In mine, too, there is a moon!

CHORUS:

How lovely! A moon here, too!

Pining Wind looks into the other pail, then up to the sky, then again at the two pails. Having received the wagon-rope from Autumn Rain, she pulls the wagon up to the drums, then looks back at it one more time.

WIND:

The moon is one,

CHORUS:

reflections two, three the brimming tide,
for tonight we load our wagon with the moon.[90]
O no, I do not find them dreary,
the tide-roads of the sea!

Stage attendant removes the wagon. Pining Wind sits on a stool in front of the drums, while Autumn Rain sits directly on stage, slightly behind her and to her left. They are in the salt-house.

MONK: (*unnamed*) The people of the salt-house have returned. I will ask them to give me shelter for the night.

(*mondō*) I beg your pardon, there in the salt-house! Excuse me, please!

RAIN (*rises*): What is it?

MONK: I am a traveler, and now the sun has set. May I have shelter for the night?

RAIN: Please wait a moment. I will ask the owner. (*Turns to Pining Wind, kneels on one knee.*) I beg your pardon, but a traveler is here. He says he wants shelter for the night.

---

on *tsuge* (boxwood) and *tsugeji* (will not tell [of my plight]) and on *sashi* ("insert" a comb in one's hair) and *sashi-kuru* ([waves] come surging in). In the original poem, the girl explains to her lover that she has been so busy gathering brine, she has not been able even to dress her hair with a comb before coming to meet him.

90. To "one [moon]" and "two [reflections]," the original adds the puns *mitsu* ("three" or "brimming") and *yo* ("four" or "night"). "For" is meant to be homophonous with "four."

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WIND: From the start I wanted to have you stay, but this house is simply not fit to be seen. That is why I refused.

MONK: It is very good of you to have me. Since I am a monk and have always been one, my travels have no particular goal. On what grounds, then, should I prefer one lodging to another? Besides, here on Suma shore, any sensitive person ought actually to prefer a somewhat melancholy life:

Should one perchance
ask after me,
say that on Suma shore,
salt, sea-tangle drops
are falling as I grieve.[92]

Yes, that was Yukihira's poem. By the way, I noticed that pine tree on the shore. When I asked a man about it, he told me that it stands in memory of two saltmakers named Pining Wind and Autumn Rain. (*Pining Wind and Autumn Rain weep.*) I have no connection of my own with them, of course, but I prayed for them before going on. Why, how strange! When I mentioned Yukihira, both of you seemed overcome with sorrow. What is the meaning of your grief?

WIND AND RAIN: Oh, it is true! When love is within, love's colors will show without![93] The way you quoted his poem, "Should one by chance inquire for me," brought on such pangs of longing! So tears of attachment to the human world once more moistened our sleeves. (*They weep.*)

MONK: Tears of attachment to the human world? You talk as though you were not of the living. And Yukihira's poem seems to afflict you with feelings of painful longing; I do not understand. Please, both of you, tell me your names!

WIND AND RAIN:

(*kudoki-guri*) I am ashamed!
As the tale rises to my lips,
I whom none ask after, ever,
rejoin a world gone long ago,
where, brine drenched, I learn no lesson
but suffer on in bitterness of heart.[94]
(*kudoki*) Yet having spoken,

---

92. According to the *Kokinshū* (ca. 905), Yukihira, in exile at Suma, sent this poem back to someone in the capital. The "salt, sea-tangle drops" are both the brine that drips from the seaweed gathered by saltmakers along the beach and the poet's own tears.

93. A well-known saying, ultimately derived from the Chinese classic *Mencius*.

94. The brine that drenches her in her daily work also represents the memories from which she can never be free. This kudoki-guri passage uses language from the "Suma" chapter of *The Tale of Genji*.

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CHORUS:

and on and on I only pray
that he and I might share our life—
but fruitlessly.
His keepsakes bring me no joy!
She throws them down but cannot leave them;
picks them up, and his own face
looms before her. Do as she may,
From the pillow,
from the foot of the bed,
love comes pursuing.[100]
Down she sinks in helpless tears,
lost in misery.

(*The donning of the robe*)

In the shite spot, Pining Wind collapses into a sitting position and weeps. To ashirai *music, the stage attendant clothes her in the robe and places the hat on her head. She weeps once more.*

WIND:

(*ge-no-ei*) River of Three Crossings:[101]
the grim ford of ceaseless weeping
yet conceals a gulf of churning love!
(*kakeai*) O what happiness! Yukihira is standing there, calling my name, Pining Wind!
I am going to him!

She rises and starts toward the pine. Autumn Rain comes up behind her and catches her right sleeve.

RAIN: How awful! This state you are in is exactly what drowns you in the sin of clinging! You have not yet forgotten the mad passion you felt when we still belonged to the world. That is a pine tree. Yukihira is not there.

WIND:

You are too cruel, to talk that way! That pine *is* Yukihira!
Though for a time we may say goodbye,

---

100. Anonymous, *Kokinshū*, Haikai Poems, no. 1023.

101. The river that the soul must cross to reach the afterworld. It has three fords (deep, medium, and shallow), depending on the sins that burden the soul.

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back with me once more, while I,
beside the tree, rise now, draw near:
so dear, the wind-bent pine—
I love him still!

(*Dance*: ha-no-mai)

Pining Wind ceases weeping, then lifts her head and dances a ha-no-mai *around the pine. As the text continues, she continues to dance and mime.*

CHORUS:

In the pine a wind blows wild.
The Suma breakers rage nightlong
While wrongful clinging brings you this, our dream.
In your kindness, give us comfort!
Now, farewell:
(*uta*) receding waves fall silent
along Suma shore
a breeze sweeps down from off the hills.
On the pass, the cocks are crowing.
The dream is gone, without a shadow
night opens into dawn.
It was autumn rain you heard,
but this morning see:
pining wind alone lingers on,
pining wind alone lingers on.

Facing the side from the shite spot, stamps the final beat.

[Translated by Royall Tyler]

TAKASAGO

Attributed to Zeami

In one of his nō treatises, *Teachings on Style and the Flower* (*Fūshikaden*), Zeami declares that the ultimate goal of nō is to create a peaceful world and to bring pleasure to everyone. This assertion is grounded in a traditional tenet in which art and society are said to interact with each other. A disordered society produces discordant art and, conversely, if art is created properly, it will lead to a just society. First expounded in the Great Preface to the *Book of Songs*, this tenet then appeared in the *Kana* Preface to the *Kokinshū*, which later generations in Japan came to regard as a canonical defense of Japanese poetry. This social purpose of art is most clearly advanced in "deity plays" (*kami-nō*), one of the five categories of nō plays, in which deities bless an emperor's

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Under the waning moon,
We awake on our rush mats
To the familiar murmur of the pine,
And communing with our hearts,
We express our thoughts in verse.
(*sage-uta*) Our only visitor, the bay breeze,
Whispers in the pine;
The needles are falling
From the tree upon our sleeves;
Broom in hand,
Let us sweep them away,
Let us sweep them away.
(*age-uta*) Here at Takasago,
Here at Takasago
Each day the pine on the hill grows older
And advances in years.
How we have aged,
Sweeping away the fallen needles under the pine!
Shall we too live on for many years to come
Like the sturdy ancient pines
Of long-famed Iki,[106] (*Old Man moves to the center and Old Woman to the corner.*)
Of long-famed Iki?

TOMONARI: (*mondō*) (*rises*) We have been waiting for a villager. Look, an old couple has just appeared over there! Pardon me, I have something to ask you.

OLD MAN: Were you speaking to me? What is it you wish?

TOMONARI: Pray tell me, which is the Takasago Pine?

OLD MAN: This is the Takasago Pine under which we are now sweeping.

TOMONARI: The Takasago and Sumino-e[107] Pines are called the ""Twin Pines," but how can this be when Takasago and Sumiyoshi are different places?

OLD MAN: You are right. In the Preface to the *Kokinshū*, it is written, "The pines of Takasago and of Sumino-e seem like twins." I myself come from Sumiyoshi in Settsu Province, but this old woman is a native of this place. (*Turns toward Old Woman.*) If you know anything about this pine, you ought to tell this priest.

TOMONARI:

It is passing strange,
That this aged pair should dwell apart,

---

106. An ancient pine grove on the coast of Chikuzen Province, Kyushu, alleged to have sprung from a spray of pine needles stuck in the ground by Empress Jingū (r. 201–209) while preparing for her expedition against Korea.

107. Sumino-e is a variant name of Sumiyoshi.

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Words cannot express
The happiness of those whose days are lived
Under our sovereign's blessed rule,
Under our sovereign's blessed rule.

Old Man sits down at the center.

TOMONARI: (*unnamed*) Pray tell me more about the auspicious Takasago Pine.

CHORUS:

(*kuri*) Plants and trees, men say, have no soul,
Yet in due season they blossom and bear fruit.
Under the warm spring sun
The branches on the south side flower first.

OLD MAN:

(*sashi*) But the pine tree remains
Unchanging
Throughout the year.

CHORUS:

Though spring may flee and winter come,
Its green is unfading;
Even in the snow
It grows greener.
Ten times the pine shall bloom![109]
So it is said from ancient times.

OLD MAN:

In this auspicious reign

CHORUS:

Jeweled words, like glistening dewdrops,
Light up our people's hearts,

OLD MAN:

Awakening in all living beings

CHORUS:

A love of poetry.
(*kuse*) For, as Chōnō writes,[110]
All of nature's voices

---

109. Part of a couplet by Onoe no Asatsuna in the *Honchō monzui* (ca. 1060), expressing his wishes for the emperor's prosperity. According to an old saying, since the pine tree blossoms once every thousand years, the wished-for length of the reign is ten thousand years. Such an expression of good wishes appears frequently in the congratulatory verse and prose of this period.

110. An eleventh-century poet. The following nine lines are from an essay on poetics that was erroneously attributed to him in the medieval period.

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Hoisting our sails,
Under the rising moon
We put out on the flowing tide.
Leaving behind the isle of Awaji[113]
And passing distant Naruo[114]
To Sumino-e we have come,
To Sumino-e we have come.

They return to the waki spot and sit down. To deha *entrance music, the god of the Sumiyoshi Shrine advances along the bridgeway and takes his stand by the first pine. He wears a* kantan-otoko *mask, long black wig, "open-work" crown, red and white–striped heavy silk kimono, lined hunting robe, and wide white divided skirt.*

SUMIYOSHI GOD:

(*sashi*) Long years have passed
Since first I saw
The Pine of Sumiyoshi by the sea.
How many ages has it seen?[115]
Do you not know the bond between us,
And how since ancient days
I have poured my blessings on the Imperial House?[116]
And, ye musicians of the shrine,
This night let sacred music,
Dance, and the throb of drums
Gladden my heart!

Below, the Sumiyoshi God enters the stage and moves and gestures in consonance with the text.

CHORUS:

(*jō-no-ei*) Forth from the waves of the western sea
That beat on Aoki-ga-hara,

---

113. An island separating Osaka Bay from the western part of the Inland Sea.

114. A town at the mouth of the Muko River, east of Kobe.

115. A poem composed, according to *The Tales of Ise*, episode 117, by a certain emperor on his visit to the Sumiyoshi Shrine.

116. A poem composed in reply to the preceding by the god of Sumiyoshi, who assumed a visible form.

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SUMIYOSHI GOD:

I first arose—the god himself.[117]
(*issei*) It's spring, and the melting snow
Lies lightly on Asaka Beach.[118]

CHORUS:

By the rocks where men gather seaweed,

SUMIYOSHI GOD:

I recline on the ancient pine roots;

CHORUS:

A thousand years of evergreen fill my palm;

SUMIYOSHI GOD:

Plucking a spray of plum blossoms
I adorn my hair,

CHORUS:

And petals, like spring snow, scatter over my robe.[119]

(*Dance*: kami-mai)
Sumiyoshi God performs an exuberant kami-mai *dance.*

CHORUS:

(*rongi*) O blessed vision,
O blessed vision!
Under the lovely moon
Before the Sumiyoshi Shrine the god is dancing!
Awe fills our hearts.

SUMIYOSHI GOD:

The voices of the dancing maids rise clear,
The waters of the bay
Mirror the Pine of Sumino-e—
This is the "Blue Sea Waves" dance.[120]

CHORUS:

Straight is the way of the gods and the sovereign
And straight the road to the capital

SUMIYOSHI GOD:

By which the traveler "returns to the Imperial City."[121]

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117. A modified quotation from a poem by Urabe no Kanenao in the *Shokukokinshū* (Deities, no. 727), to the effect that when the god Izanagi, after his visit to the netherworld, purified himself in the sea at Aoki-ga-bara (Hyūga Province, Kyushu), the god of Sumiyoshi was born from the waves.

118. A beach near the Sumiyoshi Shrine.

119. A quatrain by Tachibana no Aritsura, *Wakan rōeishū*, no. 29.

120. The *seigaiha*, a classical dance of Chinese or Korean origin.

121. *Genjō-raku* (Returning to the Imperial City) was the name of a classical dance.

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CHORUS:

Clad in an auspicious

SUMIYOSHI GOD:

Omi robe,[122]

CHORUS:

My outstretched arms expel evil spirits,
My inward-gathering hands embrace long life, prosperity, and happiness.
"A Thousand Autumns"[123]
Gladdens the people's hearts;
And "Ten Thousand Years"[124]
Endows them with new life.
The murmur of the wind in the Twin Pines
Fills each heart with gladness,
Fills each heart with gladness!

Sumiyoshi God, in the shite spot, stamps twice.

[Adapted from a translation by Gakujutsu shinkōkai]

ATSUMORI

Attributed to Zeami

The protagonists of warrior plays are the ghosts of those who have fallen in battle. In earlier versions, they usually seem to have been portrayed as denizens of a hellish realm of never-ending battle in the afterlife.[125] However, in *The Three Paths* (*Sandō*), Zeami recommends selecting protagonists of warrior plays from *The Tales of the Heike* and depicting them in an elegant manner. In this way, Zeami transformed warrior plays to suit the tastes of his cultural patrons in the capital, such as court nobles and high-ranking samurai, who favored elegant beauty over the rough mimicry of demonic battles between long-dead warriors.

The Tales of the Heike was enormously popular at the beginning of the medieval period. Earlier versions of this narrative are closer to historical documents in their descriptions of actual battles between the Heike (Taira) and the Genji (Minamoto)

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122. A white upper garment figured in green, formerly worn by court dancers and the officiating priest on the occasion of important Shinto rites or at court banquets.

123. *Senshū-raku*, a musical composition by Minamoto no Yoriyoshi, performed on the occasion of the *daijōe*, one of the principal Shinto rites connected with the Japanese enthronement ceremony.

124. *Manzai-raku*, another Chinese classical dance.

125. In *Teaching on Style and the Flower* (*Fūshikaden*), Zeami notes that warrior plays "tend to be demonic" and "are not interesting."

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clans, whereas later versions highlight the aristocratic refinement of the Heike and the tragedy of the deaths of the clan's noblemen and -women. In addition, Zeami often changed details of the original plot in order to accentuate the elegance of the protagonists.

Atsumori is Zeami's adaptation of a famous episode from the *Heike*. Near the end of the battle at Ichi-no-tani on Suma Bay, Naozane, a follower of the rival Genji clan, catches sight of an apparently high-ranking warrior of the Heike alone on the seashore. Wrestling his enemy to the ground and removing his helmet, Naozane realizes that the soldier—Atsumori—is a boy of only about fifteen, nearly the same age as his own son. Although his first impulse is to spare the boy's life, he sees other Genji followers fast approaching and knows that they will surely kill the boy. Thinking it better for the boy that he be the one to strike the final blow, Naozane is compelled to cut off the boy's head. When he tears off a piece of Atsumori's garment to wrap the head, he notices a flute, a symbol of courtly elegance, hidden under the boy's armor. Some time afterward, revolted by the calling that has led him to commit such a brutal act, Naozane takes the tonsure. Later descriptions of this episode emphasize young Atsumori's nobility, his almost feminine beauty, and his musical talent, as well as Naozane's regret for having killed such an exquisite youth.

The nō play *Atsumori* revisits the encounter at Suma Bay between Naozane, who is now a monk named Renshō, and the ghost of Atsumori, disguised as a reaper. In the first act, the ghost of Atsumori shows his love for music by playing the flute. A question about the sound of his flute opens the conversation between the monk and the ghost, which soon leads to a song reciting the names of famous flutes in Japanese literature. Recurrent references to the flute function as allusions to the one that Atsumori kept close to his person during his life, even on the field of battle.

The play also alludes frequently to the "Suma" chapter of *The Tale of Genji*. Its background scene, the shore at Suma, is thus portrayed as a highly poetic landscape with strong associations with aristocratic culture rather than a bloody battlefield. These associations even suggest an analogy between Atsumori and the protagonist of the Heian-period tale of the Shining Genji, as both characters fled the capital for this remote seashore under adverse circumstances. The climax of the second act, unlike that of typical warrior plays, describes not the warriors' torment in hell but Atsumori's recollection of a banquet he enjoyed with his family the night before his death. Atsumori's ghost reenacts the singing, flute playing, and dancing during the banquet.

Atsumori is a dream play (mugen-nō) in two acts, a structure that Zeami invented, although he did not follow it strictly here. For example, in a standard mugen-nō, the monk would simply be a passerby with no personal connection with the ghost, whereas in *Atsumori*, the monk is Naozane, the murderer of Atsumori. Such an exceptional personal relationship between the ghost and the monk is based on the fact that the original episode in the *Heike* is a tragedy for both Atsumori and Naozane, who is forced by circumstances to kill the young boy. Consequently, just as Atsumori needs to be saved from the torment of hell, Naozane is desperate to be delivered from his own anguish. This double salvation is attained at the end of the play, when Atsumori

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forgives Naozane and expresses his strong hope that, through Naozane's prayers, Atsumori will attain buddhahood.

Characters in Order of Appearance

THE MONK RENSHŌ, formerly the Minamoto warrior Kumagai no Jirō Naozane	*waki*
A YOUTH, the ghost of Atsumori appearing as a grass cutter	*mae-shite*
TWO OR THREE COMPANIONS to the Youth	*tsure*
A VILLAGER	*ai*
THE GHOST OF THE TAIRA WARRIOR ATSUMORI (*Atsumori, jūroku,* or *chūjō* mask)	*nochi-shite*

Place: Ichi-no-tani, in Settsu Province

Act 1

To shidai *music, Renshō enters, carrying a rosary. He stands in the shite spot, facing the rear of the stage.*

RENSHŌ:

(*shidai*) The world is all a dream, and he who wakes
the world is all a dream, and he who wakes,
casting it from him, may yet know the real. (*Turns to audience.*)

(*nanori*) You have before you one who in his time was Kumagai no Jirō Naozane, a warrior from Musashi Province. Now I have renounced the world, and Renshō is my name. It was I, you understand, who struck Atsumori down; and the great sorrow of this deed moved me to become the monk you see. Now I am setting out for Ichi-no-tani, to comfort Atsumori and guide his spirit toward enlightenment.

(*age-uta*) The wandering moon,
issuing from among the Ninefold Clouds,[126]
issuing from among the Ninefold Clouds, (*Mimes walking.*)
swings southward by Yodo and Yamazaki,
past Koya Pond and the Ikuta River,
and Suma shore, loud with pounding waves,
to Ichi-no-tani, where I have arrived,
to Ichi-no-tani, where I have arrived.

126. The moon suggests the monk Renshō himself. The "Ninefold Clouds" refer to the capital. "Ninefold," an epithet for the imperial palace, and hence for the capital, refers to the nine gates of ancient Chinese palaces.

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Cicada Wing, and other famous flutes;
while this one, that the mower blows,
could be Greenleaf, as you will agree.[130]
Perhaps upon the beach at Sumiyoshi,
one might expect instead a Koma flute;[131]
but this is Suma. Imagine, if you will,
a flute of wood left from saltmakers' fires
a flute of wood left from saltmakers' fires.

Exeunt Companions. Youth, in the shite spot, turns to Renshō.

RENSHŌ: (*kakeai*) How strange! While the other mowers have gone home, you have stayed on, alone. Why is this?

YOUTH: You ask why have I stayed behind? A voice called me here, chanting the Name. O be kind and grant me the Ten Invocations![132]

RENSHŌ: Very gladly. I will give you Ten Invocations, as you ask. But then tell me who you are.

YOUTH: In truth, I am someone with a tie to Atsumori.

RENSHŌ:

One with a tie to Atsumori?
Ah, the name recalls such memories! (*Presses his palms together in prayer over his rosary.*)
"Namu Amida Butsu," I chant in prayer:

Youth goes down on one knee and presses his palms together.

YOUTH AND RENSHŌ:

"If I at last become a Buddha,
then all sentient beings who call my Name
in all the worlds, in the ten directions,
will find welcome in Me, for I abandon none."[133]

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130. It was felt that bamboo washed up by the sea yielded particularly fine flutes. Atsumori's own was, in fact, the one named Little Branch (Saeda). The divine music of Greenleaf was legendary.

131. Because Sumiyoshi was where ships from Koma (Korea) once used to set anchor. The *Koma-bue* (Koma flute) is used in the ancient court music known as *gakaku*.

132. The Name is that of Amida, the Buddha of Infinite Light, whose invocation is *Namu Amida Butsu* (Hail Amida Buddha). The Ten Invocations (ten callings of the Name for the benefit of another) were often requested of holy persons even by the living. Renshō's teacher, Hōnen, was an outstanding Amida devotee. In *Pining Wind*, too, the monk invokes Amida for the spirits of the dead.

133. The canonical vow made by Amida before he became a Buddha, to save all beings by his grace. These lines, in Chinese, are from the sutra known in Japan as Kanmuryōju-kyō.

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Gambar dengan hak cipta

In act 2, Atsumori's ghost, appearing in his original form, refrains from attacking Kumagai and drops to one knee. (From *Meiji-Period Nō Illustrations* by Tsukioka Kōgyo, in the Hōsei University Kōzan Bunko Collection)

CHORUS:

(*uta*) Then, O monk, do not abandon me!
One calling of the Name should be enough,
but you have comforted me by night and day—
a most precious gift! As to my name,
no silence I might keep could quite conceal
the one you pray for always, dawn and dusk; (*Youth rises.*)
that name is my own. And, having spoken,
he fades away and is lost to view,
he fades away and is lost to view.

Exit Youth.

Interlude

Villager passes by and, in response to Renshō's request for information, describes how Atsumori was defeated by Kumagai on this very coast. He expresses deep sympathy for the former and a fierce hatred for the latter. Renshō reveals his identity. Greatly surprised, the Villager apologizes for his previous indignation, advises Renshō to pray for the peace of Atsumori's spirit, and exits.

Act 2

RENSHŌ:

(*age-uta*) Then it is well: to guide and comfort him,

Bahan dengan hak cipta

RENSHŌ:

Why, that was the music I remember!
A flute was playing so sweetly in their camp!
We, the attackers, heard it well enough.

ATSUMORI:

It was Atsumori's flute, you see:
the one I took with me to my death

RENSHŌ:

and that you wished to play this final time,

ATSUMORI:

while from every throat

RENSHŌ:

rose songs and poems

CHORUS:

(*issei*) sung in chorus to a lively beat.

(*Dance:* chū-no-mai)

Atsumori performs a lively chū-no-mai, *ending in the shite spot. Below, he continues dancing and miming in consonance with the text.*

ATSUMORI:

(*unnamed*) Then, in time, His Majesty's ship sailed,

CHORUS:

(*noriji*) with the whole clan behind him in their own.
Anxious to be aboard, I sought the shore,
but all the warships and the imperial barge
stood already far, far out to sea.

ATSUMORI:

(*unnamed*) I was stranded. Reining in my horse,
I halted, at a loss for what to do.

CHORUS:

(*chū-noriji*) There came then, galloping behind me,
Kumagai no Jirō Naozane,
shouting, "You will not escape my arm!"
At this Atsumori wheeled his mount
and swiftly, all undaunted, drew his sword.
We first exchanged a few rapid blows,
then, still on horseback, closed to grapple, fell,
and wrestled on, upon the wave-washed strand.
But you had bested me, and I was slain.
Now karma brings us face to face again.
"You are my foe!" Atsumori shouts, (*Brandishes sword.*)
lifting his sword to strike; but Kumagai (*He drops to one knee.*)

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with kindness has repaid old enmity, (*Rises, retreats.*)
calling the Name to give the spirit peace.
They at last shall be reborn together
upon one lotus throne in paradise.
Renshō, you were no enemy of mine. (*He drops his sword and, in the shite spot, turns to Renshō with palms pressed together.*)
Pray for me, O pray for my release!
Pray for me, O pray for my release!

Facing right center from the shite spot, stamps the final beat.

[Translated by Royall Tyler]

SUMIDA RIVER (*SUMIDAGAWA*)
Attributed to Kanze Motomasa

Sumida River was written by Kanze Motomasa (1401?–1432), the eldest son of Zeami. The few plays that can confidently be attributed to Motomasa clearly manifest his talent as a playwright, exploring the possibilities for nō beyond those discovered by his father. Whereas highly refined poetic language and elegant dance characterize Zeami's plays, Motomasa preferred to describe dramatic situations more directly. Moreover, unlike many of Zeami's plays, in which reality and illusion fuse together into a dream-like sphere where the dead and the living communicate without difficulty, in Motomasa's plays, the protagonists often confront death as an irreversible break from the living world. One of his plays, *Morihisa*, follows the protagonist's journey to the place of his execution, focusing on his awareness of impending death. The protagonist of another play, *Utaura*, is a young man who has returned from a journey through hell and whose hair has turned white from the horrors he has witnessed in the underworld.

Motomasa's signature features can be found in *Sumida River*, in which a deranged mother travels all the way from the capital to eastern Japan in search of her kidnapped son, only to find nothing but his tomb. A specific source for this play has not yet been found, but kidnappings by slave traders were fairly common in medieval times owing to labor shortages in northern and eastern Japan, which still were relatively undeveloped. By buying or kidnapping people, traders supplied those areas with slaves from western and southern Japan, which is why stories of parents searching for their lost children are often found in literary works of the time. This may also explain why the deranged mother who is the protagonist of *Sumida River* heads eastward in pursuit of her kidnapped son.

Two characteristics distinguish this play from other nō plays about parents searching for their lost children. First, *Sumida River* is the only nō play in which a searching parent is ultimately unable to find her beloved son alive. All other such nō plays end with the happy reunion of parent(s) and child, who often are brought together by the

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grace of the Buddha or another deity. Needless to say, in real life, such miraculous reunions must have been extremely rare.

Second, the protagonist dances very little in this play; the *kakeri* dance, which she performs after her initial appearance on stage, is kept very brief and simple. Furthermore, during this "dance," she merely paces around the stage, and her distraught mental status is expressed by frequent changes in tempo. By contrast, in most other nō plays that feature distraught characters, dance plays an important part. At that time, deranged people were regarded almost as entertainers, people who, unrestricted by social mores, could easily be induced to dance, sing, or give amusing answers to questions put to them. As an example, in his treatise *Teachings on Style and the Flower*, Zeami notes that crazed female protagonists should appear on stage in a light mood, as entertainers, despite their sorrow at having lost a child or lover. Therefore, the purpose of his plays featuring distraught mothers in search of their children is entertainment (dances, songs, and witty repartee), and their overall mood is generally lighthearted, since the mother's anxiety about her child is masked by the comicality of her derangement.

By contrast, the mother in *Sumida River* rarely entertains with her behavior. The only exception occurs during a brief scene in which she asks a boatman to let her get on board, citing the famous section 9 of *The Tales of Ise*, included in this anthology, which relates the journey of a nobleman (who was, in the medieval period, believed to be Ariwara no Narihira, a famous ninth-century poet) from the capital to the eastern provinces. While alluding to this episode, the mother in *Sumida River* dances and tries to win over the boatman, who eventually allows her to board. At the same time, her concern for her lost son is acutely expressed throughout this scene through an explicit comparison with Narihira's sorrow at being separated from his lover. The immediacy of the mother's longing for her missing son, even while she provides a bit of entertainment, makes the revelation awaiting her in the boat all the more tragic.

On the opposite side of the river, she finds the year-old grave mound of her son and has a very brief reunion with his ghost. The mound is represented on stage by a bulky, cabinet-like structure, wrapped in cloth, with a grass tussock on top of it and a child actor hidden inside. This mound is brought on stage before the play begins. Although the onstage space in the first half of the play is still the west bank of the river, the mound on the east bank is always at center stage, foreshadowing the grim reality awaiting the mother on the far side of the river.

A famous argument, recorded in *Conversations on Sarugaku*, between Zeami and Motomasa concerned how to handle the child's ghost on stage. Zeami advised his son that it would be more interesting not to have the ghost appear on stage at all, since it was supposed to be visible to no one but his mother. Motomasa, however, disagreed, insisting that the scene should be performed in another way. The conversation ended with Zeami's suggestion that he try both ways and then decide which was better.

Today, a child actor usually plays the part of the son's ghost on stage, as Motomasa intended. As the chorus is intoning the name of Amida Buddha, the child's high, ringing voice suddenly joins in, and afterward he emerges from the mound, appearing

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as a small figure with long, disheveled black hair. Despite his mother's exultation, he slips through her arms, which vainly try to hold him, and soon vanishes. He then reappears for a moment, as if to assure his mother that his presence was not a mere illusion, but then immediately disappears into his grave forever. Once in a great while, the play is performed in accordance with Zeami's suggestion: either the child's ghost does not appear on stage at all, or else a child actor joins in the recitation of the name of Amida Buddha, but from inside the mound without ever showing himself.

A comparison of these performance strategies shows that Motomasa's aim was to make the contrast between the living and the dead more pronounced and to intensify the mother's grief for her son. The child actor's presence on stage makes even more vivid the mother's joy at her miraculous reunion with her son. Her joy at this apparent miracle, however, only deepens her hopelessness and despair when she realizes that what she took to be the figure of her son was in fact nothing but the thick grass growing on his grave.

Sumida River later became a source of inspiration for many literary as well as theatrical works, including plays for the puppet theater and kabuki, and even Benjamin Britten's opera *Curlew River* (1964).

Characters in Order of Appearance

A FERRYMAN on the Sumida River	*waki*
A TRAVELER from the capital	*waki-tsure*
A MADWOMAN, Umewakamaru's mother (*fukai* mask)	*shite*
UMEWAKAMARU'S GHOST	*kokata* (child actor)

Place: Sumida River, in Musashi Province

Time: Evening and night of the fifteenth day (the full-moon day by the lunar calendar) of the Third Month (in late spring)

Stage attendants place a burial-mound prop, topped with willow branches, in the back center. The boy playing Umewakamaru's ghost is concealed inside the mound.

The Ferryman, wearing a sedge hat, enters, accompanied by nanoribue *music, and stands upstage right, facing the audience.*

FERRYMAN: (*nanori*) I am a ferryman on the Sumida River, in the province of Musashi. Today I must row the ferryboat quickly and carry many people across. For certain reasons there is to be on this site a great Recitation of the Buddha's name, and so a large crowd will assemble, monks and laymen alike. I ask that all of you bear this in mind.

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holds a sprig of bamboo grass, signifying madness. She stops at the first pine, facing the audience.

WOMAN:

(*sashi*) True it is:
A mother's heart
is not in darkness, yet
she wanders lost
on the path of longing
for her child.[140]
Now I understand these lines.
What shall I say to travelers
on the snowy path
to ask where he has gone?[141]
(*issei*) Do you hear?
Even the fickle wind
passing high in the sky

CHORUS:

rustles at the waiting pine
when it comes to call.[142]

Enters the stage.

(*Quasi dance:* kakeri)

She performs a very brief kakeri *dance to instrumental accompaniment.*

WOMAN:

In this world of dew
on Arrowroot Moor

CHORUS:

am I to pass the days
bemoaning my misfortune?[143]

---

140. Fujiwara no Kanesuke, *Gosenshū*, Miscellaneous 1, no. 1103. A "heart in darkness" signifies a heart unenlightened by the truth of Buddhism. Attachment, even to one's own child, was seen as an impediment to enlightenment.

141. Ōshikōchi no Mitsune, *Kokinshū*, Spring 2, no. 30: "Now that spring has come I hear the wild geese flocking home. If they were to meet him on the cloudy [snowy] white path, would they give him a message?"

142. Kunaikyō, *Shinkokinshū*, Love 3, no. 1199. Although even the wind responds, the woman's missing child does not. "Waiting pine" approximates the common pun on *matsu*, which means both "pine tree" and "to wait."

143. Jien, *Shinkokinshū*, Love 1, no. 1030: "My love is like the autumn rains, unable to dye the pines; but on Arrowroot Moor a tempest blows." Arrowroot Moor was at the foot of the hills east of the capital. In the lines of the woman and the chorus, arrowroot evokes dew, which in turn suggests the transience of mortal life.

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WOMAN:

(*sashi*) Here you see a woman who dwelt for many years,
for many years at Kitashirakawa, in the capital.[144]
Then suddenly I saw my only child
kidnapped by a slave trader,
and when I sought my boy, I learned
he had gone down east beyond the Meeting Barrier[145]
to a strange and distant land called Azuma.
Driven to distraction by this news, I thought
My beloved child must have come this way,
and I have wandered here in search of him. (*Weeps.*)

CHORUS:

(*sage-uta*) The heart of a mother
who travels a thousand leagues
does not forget her child—[146]
so I have heard, and yet
(*age-uta*) our bond endures
only in this single fleeting life,
our bond endures
only in this single fleeting life,[147]
and we could not stay together
even for that long.
Mother and child,
one here, one there,
have parted like the Four Birds.[148]
Seeking my child, this mother's heart
in its extremity has reached
Sumida River
between Musashi Province and Shimōsa,
has reached Sumida River
between Musashi Province and Shimōsa
at the end of the Azuma road.

---

144. Kitashirakawa is in the northeastern part of the capital, near the Temple of the Silver Pavilion.

145. Travelers going east from the capital had to pass through the official checkpoint known as the Meeting Barrier (Ōsaka no seki), between Yamashiro and Ōmi Provinces.

146. "A parent may go a thousand leagues but does not forget his child" (*Bo Juyi's Collected Works*).

147. A Buddhist belief held that the bond between parent and child lasted for only one lifetime.

148. This alludes to a story in *Words and Deeds of Confucius* (J. *Kōshi kego*) about a family forced to sell a child into slavery; their heartrending cries at parting resemble those of a legendary mother bird whose four fledglings have grown up and are leaving her nest forever.

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WOMAN: (*mondō*) Hallo, hallo, please let me board, too.

FERRYMAN: Where have you come from, and where are you going?

WOMAN: I have come from the capital in search of someone.

FERRYMAN: If you are from the capital and are mad, then you must entertain us with a wild dance. Otherwise I shall not let you board this boat.

WOMAN: What unfeeling words! And as a ferryman on the Sumida River you should say, "Get aboard quickly, the sun is about to set."[149]

To say "Board not" to a woman from the capital,
even one who looks as I do,
does not befit a ferryman on the Sumida River.
Do not speak such unseemly words!

FERRYMAN: Indeed you bear the elegance of a person of the capital.

WOMAN: Your words catch my ear. Narihira, too, at this crossing said

(*jō-no-ei*) If indeed you bear the name of
"capital bird,"
then I shall ask you:
Is the person I long for
living or dead?

(*mondō*) Ferryman! The white bird over there is a bird not often seen in the capital. What is it called?

FERRYMAN: Why, that is a seagull from the offing.

WOMAN: Unfeeling words again! On the shore you may call it a curlew or a gull, as you please, but here on the Sumida River, why do you not reply that that white bird is a capital bird?

FERRYMAN:

You are right, I have misspoken.
Though I live in this famous place
my heart is unrefined, and so
I did not reply "capital bird,"

WOMAN:

"Seagull from the offing,"
you said, and the evening waves

FERRYMAN:

roll back to the past
when Narihira

WOMAN:

asked "living or dead?"

---

149. That is, he should speak like the ferryman in *The Tales of Ise*.

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She goes to Ferryman, kneels, strikes the stage with her hat, then holds it out toward Ferryman in supplication. During the age-uta *Ferryman has slipped the outer robe from his right shoulder and grasped an oar in preparation for the crossing.*

FERRYMAN: (*mondō*) Never has there been such a cultured madwoman! Please come aboard quickly. (*Removing her hat and holding it in her left hand, the Woman moves downstage and sits, facing the audience, signifying that she has boarded the boat. Ferryman stands behind her with the oar.*) This is a dangerous crossing. Please take care and be still. You who arrived earlier should board now, too.

TRAVELER: I understand.

He sits with the woman, facing the audience.

TRAVELER: Why have so many people gathered beneath that willow tree on the far bank?

FERRYMAN: They have assembled for a great Recitation of the Buddha's name. A sad tale lies behind it. I will tell you as the boat crosses to the other side.

(*katari*) It happened last year, on the fifteenth day of the Third Month, the same date as today. A slave trader who had purchased a youth from the capital, a boy of twelve or thirteen years, was taking him to the northeast. Perhaps exhausted from the unaccustomed journey, the youth fell gravely ill and finally lay down on this riverbank, unable to take another step. What cruel men there are in this world! Abandoning the youth where he lay at the side of the road, the trader went on to the northeast. The people living here tried every means to nurse the boy, as he appeared to be of good birth, but perhaps because of a bond from a former life, he only grew weaker and weaker. When it seemed that he had nearly reached his end, they asked, "Where are you from, and who are you?" When they asked his father's name and his home, he replied, "I am the only child of a man named Yoshida, of Kitashirakawa, in the capital. (*Woman listens more attentively.*) After my father died I lived alone with my mother, but I was abducted by a slave trader and so have ended up like this. Please bury me in a mound by the side of this road, because I long for the sight of people from the capital; and plant a willow tree to mark the place." After speaking these words like a grown man, he recited the Buddha's name four or five times, and then died. (*Woman weeps.*) It is a very sad tale indeed.

(*mondō*) (*Looks at the passengers.*) If I am not mistaken, there appear to be people from the capital on this boat. Although our bond with the boy is a distant one, please recite the Buddha's name in his memory. While I have

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(*kakeai*) The moon has risen with the river wind.
Soon the night will end, and the hour for
nighttime recitation of the Buddha's name
has come. Each strikes his gong, urging her on,

WOMAN:

But the mother, in the excess of her grief,
unable even to recite the Buddha's name,
can only droop and weep.

FERRYMAN: What a pity. However many people may be here, it is his mother's prayers that will delight the dead child.

I hand you this gong, and

WOMAN:

for my child's sake, I hear—and truly,
as I take the gong (*Stands.*)

FERRYMAN:

sorrow ends,
and her voice grows clear,

WOMAN:

like the moonlit nighttime recitation
of the Buddha's name, spoken together,

FERRYMAN:

and our hearts, with the moon,
turn intently to the West.

Facing the mound, Ferryman and Woman join their hands in prayer.

WOMAN AND FERRYMAN:

We place our faith in the Western Paradise
and in the thirty-six billion
Amida Buddhas of one name and title.[155]

CHORUS:

(*unnamed*) Hail Amida Buddha, Hail Amida Buddha
Hail Amida Buddha, Hail Amida Buddha.

Woman strikes the gong.

WOMAN:

On the Sumida riverbank the waves
and wind lift their voices with ours.

---

155. It was said that the Western Paradise contained 36 billion (actually, 3,600,000, 000,000) worlds, each presided over by the Amida Buddha.

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Act 1

Stage attendant places a model of a torii *(shrine gate) with a brushwood fence to either side of it at front center stage. To* nanori-bue *music, the Monk enters, stands at the shite spot, and faces the audience.*

MONK: (*nanori*) I am a monk who is visiting all the provinces. Of late I have been in the capital and have seen each of the capital's famed places and ancient sites. Now that autumn is drawing to its close, I think I shall go and see Sagano[157] while at its charming best.[158] When I asked someone about these woods, he said this old site is that of Nonomiya[159] or some such place, and so I shall have a look in passing.

Moves to the center, stands in front of the torii.

MONK:

(*unnamed*) Having come to these woods,
I see that the rough-hewn log torii[160]
And the low brushwood fence
Have not changed from long ago, (*Kneels, puts hands together as in prayer.*)
But how can this be?
Never mind, for I am glad
Of this chance to come and worship.
(*uta*) Ise's sacred fence forms no barrier,[161]
Straight is the Way of the Law's teaching,
And straight is the way I came to see this holy shrine.[162]

---

157. Sagano, or Saga, is a rural area west of the capital, well known as a place of retreat and reclusion. Because of its desolate reputation, Sagano is commonly associated with autumn in Japanese poetry.

158. A strict grammatical rendering would be "because I am drawn to Sagano."

159. *Nonomiya* literally means "shrine in the fields."

160. "Rough-hewn log" means a log not completely stripped of its bark and is a phrase borrowed from the Nonomiya episode in "The Sacred Tree" (Sakaki) chapter of *The Tale of Genji*. A *torii* is a shrine gate consisting of two upright pillars crossed at the top by one or more horizontal beams (in this case, logs).

161. In other words, the deities worshiped at the Ise shrines do not distinguish between Shinto and Buddhist worship.

162. The "Law's teaching" refers to Buddhist teachings. The phrase "straight is the way" forms a pivot word modifying both the Law and the actual road the monk has taken to Ise. This also implies that the straight way of the Buddhist law leads also to the Shinto shrines of Ise. Both this passage and the "sacred fence" passage highlight the syncretic nature of Buddhist and Shinto worship in the medieval period.

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MONK: (*mondō*) In the shade of this grove as I ponder the past, my heart clear, a glamorous[167] lady suddenly appears. What person might this be?

LADY: Who am I, you ask? I should ask you the same. This is the Shrine in the Fields, where long ago the appointed Ise priestess would temporarily reside. Though later this practice came to an end, still on the seventh day of the long month,[168] on this day, each year, as I think of long ago, (*Faces audience.*)

Unknown to others
I come to clean this shrine
And serve the gods here, (*Faces Monk.*)
Where a wandering stranger has now come
And caused offense,[169] so
Quickly, quickly, take your leave!

MONK: (*kakeai*) No, no, I mean no offense, but I am indeed a wanderer with no certain future in this uncertain world which I've renounced. Well now, each year on this day you come to these ruins and ponder the past. What is the reason for this?

LADY: Shining Genji visited here on the seventh day of the long month, this very day, and pushed through the sacred fence a small branch of *sakaki*[170] he had brought, whereas the Consort[171] quickly replied with this poem that day:

No cedar marks this sacred fence,
So why have you mistakenly broken a branch of sakaki?

MONK:

Quite an elegant leaf of verse,
And the branch of sakaki you hold now,
Its color is unchanged from long ago!

LADY:

Color unchanged from long ago—a clever thought,
But only the sakaki remains unchanged
In the immutable shadowed

MONK:

Path of this grove as fall comes to its close

---

167. *Namamekeru*, which also implies "alluring."

168. *Nagazuki*, the ninth month of the lunar calendar, roughly equivalent to October.

169. She is implying that a Buddhist presence at the shrine is offensive to the Shinto gods.

170. The *sakaki*, an evergreen tree of the camellia family, is used in Shinto ritual, often as an offering placed before a shrine. Here Genji is using it as a token of the "unchanging color" of his feelings for her.

171. Miyasudokoro, Rokujō's title, given to the principal wife of a crown prince.

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In act 1, Lady Rokujō's ghost retells the story of the past to the traveling monk in front of the shrine gate. (From *Meiji-Period Nō Illustrations* by Tsukioka Kōgyo, in the Hōsei University Kōzan Bunko Collection)

LADY:

And the autumn leaves turn and scatter,
Turn and scatter;

MONK:

And the reeded plain too,

CHORUS:

(*age-uta*) Withers, Nonomiya grown wild with weeds,
Nonomiya has grown wild with weeds. (*She moves in front of the torii, bends one knee, and lays down a leaf.*)
Here, to these ruins
Where my heart is drawn in longing, (*Stands.*)
That seventh day of the long month
Has come round again.
Somehow so makeshift, (*Looks at fence.*)
This little brushwood fence,
This transient dwelling. (*Looks through the torii.*)
Now, too, in the faint light
Of the fire from the watchman's hut (*Sees the fire to the right.*)
You can see the inmost glow
Of my heart's longing revealed. (*Moves to the shite spot.*)

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LADY:

Then at the Katsura lustration[173]

CHORUS:

The sacred white strands
Afloat upon the waves, and
Myself, like floating grass, with
No one to rely upon, my heart
Drawn by the water's current:[174]
  Who will think to ask when I've gone to Ise
  If Suzuka River's waves[175] wet my sleeves or not?[176]
Leaving these words,
Mother and child together,
Though it was unprecedented,[177]
Followed the road to the Take capital,[178]
Her heart heavy with regret. (*Still sitting.*)
(*rongi*) I see, just hearing your words,
You are no ordinary person,
With no ordinary air about you.
Please tell me your name.

LADY:

Even though I tell you my name,
How ashamed this worthless one,
But surely in time it will be known
To others outside this grove, and so
If you must know,
That name belongs to one who is no more.
Oh, mourn for me!

---

173. A ceremonial purification in the Katsura River southwest of Kyoto before the Ise priestess's departure for Ise. The white strands mentioned later are usually attached to *sakaki* branches and are Shinto ritual objects. They carry away impurities as they are set adrift in the river.

174. The previous three lines allude to a poem by Ono no Komachi, *Kokinshū*, no. 938: "Steeped in misery as I am, a forlorn, floating plant, I would break off from my root; if there were but a coaxing current, I believe I'd drift away."

175. Suzuka River, in present-day Mie Prefecture, is a major stopping point along the journey to Ise and a popular poetic topos. "Waves" is preceded here by a pillow word (*makurakotoba*) that makes the literal meaning "waves of the eighty rapids" (*yasose no nami*).

176. A slight modification of the poem Lady Rokujō sends to Genji as she departs for Ise in *The Tale of Genji*.

177. It was not customary for the mother of the Ise priestess to accompany her daughter to Ise.

178. A name for the priestess's residence at Ise, which was located in the Take District of Ise, in present-day Taki County.

เนื้อหาคุ้มครองลิขสิทธิ์

CHORUS:

"One who is no more," I hear—how strange.
Well then, that one who passed so vainly from this world,

LADY:

Only her name so long remaining—

CHORUS:

The Consort

LADY (*to Monk*):

Is me!

CHORUS:

She says, the autumn wind at dusk, (*Stands.*)
And the evening moon's pale light (*Looks to the right.*)
Winnowing through the grove, (*Moves forward.*)
In the darkness near the twin pillars (*Gazes at the torii.*)
Of the rough-hewn log torii standing, (*Moves back slightly.*)
She vanishes! Leaving no trace, (*Lowers face and quietly exits.*)
She vanishes!

Interlude

Villager passes by and, in response to the Monk's request for information, relates the brief relationship between the Shining Genji and Lady Rokujō and the story of Genji's visit to her at Nonomiya. When the Monk tells him about the mysterious lady he has just met, the Villager opines that she must be the ghost of Lady Rokujō, advises the Monk to pray for the repose of her spirit, and exits.

Act 2

MONK (*still sitting*):

(*age-uta*) My sleeve spread,
In the shadow of this grove these robes of moss,
In the shadow of this grove these robes of moss
Match the color of this grass mat,[179]
And, my thoughts reaching out through the night,
I mourn her memory,
I mourn her memory.

To issei *music, the Consort enters as if riding in a carriage. She moves to the shite spot and faces the audience.*

179. Monks were said to wear moss-color robes. The grass mat implies the monk is sleeping outdoors.

เนื้อหาคุ้มครองลิขสิทธิ์

CONSORT:

(*ge-no-ei*) To Nonomiya turns the carriage decked with
All the flowers of fall, as I too return to long ago.

MONK (*to Consort*):

(*kakeai*) How strange! In the pale moonlight
The faint sound of a carriage approaching;
An unexpected sight I see: a wickerwork carriage
With its blind lowered. Now there can be no doubt;
Are you then the Consort?
And even so, what kind of carriage might this be?

CONSORT (*to Monk*):

"What kind of carriage?" you ask,
And so I recall the past—
The Kamo Festival and the carriage brawl.[180]
Not knowing whose carriage belonged to whom,

MONK:

All lined up in narrow rows;

CONSORT:

Among the onlookers' carriages was that of
The highly favored Lady Aoi.[181]

MONK:

Saying "Make way for the lady's carriage!"
They push people aside, raising a racket,

CONSORT:

But there is no place to put
Even my small carriage,
I answered, and so we held our ground, (*Looks around to the right.*)

MONK:

When front and back of my carriage

CONSORT:

They rushed, (*Moves forward.*)

CHORUS:

(*uta*) Seizing the wheel shafts and shoving (*With sleeve upturned, mimes with fan.*)
My carriage behind her attendants' carriage, (*Moves to the back as if pushed.*)
So that I was powerless to see a thing

---

180. The aforementioned struggle between Rokujō and Genji's principal wife Aoi for a prime spot along the route of the Kamo Festival parade. Both women wished to see Genji in the parade, but Rokujō was forced to watch from behind the other carriages.

181. Genji's principal wife, who later became the victim of Rokujō's malevolent wandering spirit.

เนื้อหาคุ้มครองลิขสิทธิ์

CONSORT:

And so makeshift the brushwood fence

CHORUS:

From which he wipes the dewdrops, (*Brushes away dew with fan.*)
He and I, like this world of dreams, (*Follows after Genji's visage through the torii.*)
Only aging remnants. (*Points with fan and moves to corner, then looks down.*)
Who is it I await?
As the pine cricket cries shrill,
And the wind blusters and blows (*Fanning with both hands, moves forward.*)
Through the night at Nonomiya, (*Gazes through the torii.*)
How I long for long ago! (*Suppressing tears, moves back.*)

(*Dance:* ha-no-mai)

Consort performs a brief ha-no-mai *dance.*

CHORUS:

(*nori-ji*) In and out of the torii gate (*Points to the torii with fan.*)
Graced by the divine wind of Ise (*Moves forward.*)
She goes, perhaps feeling rejected by the gods (*Holds torii pillar with left hand.*)
For treading the path of death and rebirth; (*Puts right foot through torii.*)
She mounts again her carriage, (*Stamps foot.*)
And will she leave the Burning Mansion's gate?[183] (*Faces audience.*)
The Burning Mansion's gate?

Faces right center, turns out sleeve, then stamps.

[Translated by Jack Stoneman]

ATAKA

Attributed to Kanze Kojirō Nobumitsu

The nō play *Ataka* draws from the legends about Yoshitsune (1159–1189), a son of the head family of the Genji clan. As a historical figure, Yoshitsune was victorious in successive battles against the Heike clan and helped his elder brother Yoritomo lay the foundations for the Kamakura shogunate. After this, however, he was abruptly

183. A reference to the parable of the burning mansion in the Lotus Sutra. The burning mansion is a symbol for this world of delusion and desire.

เนื้อหาคุ้มครองลิขสิทธิ์

accused of rebellion by Yoritomo, who soon became the first shogun. Yoshitsune and a few retainers fled the capital to seek refuge in the northern regions of Japan, where they were harbored by a local warrior clan, which, however, eventually betrayed them, forcing Yoshitsune to commit suicide in 1189.

Yoshitsune's tragic fate evoked widespread sympathy among the populace and gave rise to innumerable legends about his life, from his early childhood to his death and even beyond (according to one legend, he survived a final battle with the Fujiwara clan and secretly escaped to Mongolia, where he won still more renown under a new name: Genghis Khan!). Whereas *The Tales of the Heike* depicts him as a short, buck-toothed, cunning general, in later legends Yoshitsune is idealized as a tragic and noble youth, with a tender heart and almost feminine beauty.

Yoshitsune's imputed bravery and valor eventually were attributed instead to his retainers, and it was their unswerving allegiance to this innocent prince that gradually was emphasized. Among these retainers, Benkei, a former monk of Herculean strength and courage, underwent the most drastic transformation. In *Heike*, he is merely one of Yoshitsune's retainers, but in later legends, he is promoted to Yoshitsune's protector and confidant, is endowed with unequaled wisdom and superhuman physical strength, and, above all, has a fierce sense of loyalty. In legends depicting the group's escape from the capital, Benkei plays a more central role than even his master: he devises ways to evade their pursuers, issues orders to the others, consoles his depressed young master, and crosses swords with the enemy.

Ataka is loosely based on the early-Muromachi-period (1336–1573) text *Gikeiki*, the most popular source of legends about Yoshitsune and his group. Faithfully preserving the fabled relationship between master and follower, the play makes Benkei its protagonist, presenting Yoshitsune as a delicate prince completely under the former's protection. On stage, in fact, the role of Yoshitsune is played by a child actor (*kokata*). In nō, child actors often play not only juvenile roles (like the ghost of a child in *Sumida River*) but also, as in this play, audience favorites and characters of especially high rank (for example, emperors) when they are not the main protagonist. There are several reasons for doing this. Having socially or culturally prominent figures played by child actors prevents them from upstaging the main character. But more important, in medieval Japan young boys were widely regarded as the embodiment of perfect beauty and elegance. This adoration of young boys was closely related to the cultural traditions surrounding temple acolytes (*chigo*), who typically received extensive training at Buddhist temples in a variety of artistic disciplines and served as companions to older monks in intellectual and artistic activities and often in male–male sexual relationships as well. Sometimes the beauty of young boys was even regarded as the incarnation of absolute purity and holiness, so in medieval Japanese sculpture and literature, the bodhisattva Kannon and other holy figures were frequently represented as young boys.

By portraying Yoshitsune as a young boy, the play maintains its focus on its protagonist, Benkei, while at the same time highlighting Yoshitsune's aristocratic bearing (his innocence and elegance). In real life, Yoshitsune is said to have been educated

เนื้อหาคุ้มครองลิขสิทธิ์

Ataka was later reworked as a kabuki play, *The Contribution List* (*Kanjinchō*), based on a text very similar to the nō original. This adaptation, like the original nō play, also became very popular and is still among the most frequently performed plays in the kabuki repertoire.

Characters in Order of Appearance

LORD TOGASHI, keeper of the Ataka Barrier Station	*waki*
HIS SWORD-BEARER	*ai*
MINAMOTO NO YOSHITSUNE	*kokata*
MUSASHIBŌ BENKEI, his retainer	*shite*
NINE OTHER RETAINERS of Yoshitsune	*tsure*
THEIR BAGGAGE-CARRIER	*ai*

Place: At and near the barrier station at Ataka, in Kaga Province (in the southern part of today's Ishikawa Prefecture)
Time: Second Month (midspring), 1187

To nanoribue *music, Lord Togashi and his Sword-Bearer enter. Togashi stands at center stage, and his Sword-Bearer kneels behind him.*

TOGASHI: (*nanori*) I am the lord of Togashi in the Province of Kaga. Since differences have arisen between Yoritomo and Yoshitsune, the Lieutenant[185] and eleven of his retainers have disguised themselves as *yamabushi*[186] and are on their way to the northern provinces. Learning of this, Yoritomo has established new barrier stations in various provinces and ordered that all yamabushi be detained. Accordingly, I have been appointed to this place and am stopping all yamabushi. Today, too, I will give strict orders to my men.

(*mondō*) Is anyone there?

SWORD-BEARER: I am before you, my lord.

TOGASHI: Tell me if any yamabushi come this way.

SWORD-BEARER: Yes, my lord.

Togashi sits at the waki spot, his Bearer in left center.

Accompanied by shidai *music, Yoshitsune, Benkei, and the Retainers, disguised as yamabushi, enter spiritedly, followed by the Carrier. Carrier wears*

185. *Hōgan* (lieutenant in the imperial police). After Yoshitsune was appointed to this position, in 1184, the title became almost synonymous with his name.

186. *Yamabushi* are ascetic, mountain-dwelling, Buddhist monks.

Material com direitos autorais

a lacquered sedge hat, holds a thick staff, and bears a box on his back. They stand in two rows, facing each other.

BENKEI AND RETAINERS:
(*shidai*) Our travel robes of hemp,
our travel robes of hemp,
their sleeves hang limp with dew and tears.
CARRIER:
My robes too are made of hemp,
but torn, they are of little use.
BENKEI AND RETAINERS:
(*sashi*) The Hongmen shield torn,[187]
we depart the capital in travel robes,
and as the days stretch on
we thread our distant way through Koshiji,
its end too far to imagine.[188]
BENKEI:
Among your attendants today,
RETAINERS:
Ise no Saburō, Suruga no Jirō,
Kataoka, Mashio, Hitachibō,
BENKEI:
and Benkei,[189] dressed as their leader,
BENKEI AND RETAINERS:
Master and retainers, twelve in all,
in unaccustomed travel garb,
our hempen sleeves today begin to part the dew and frost.
How long our journey will last we cannot know
as we hurry through the spring snows of Koshiji.
(*age-uta*) The time was the Second Month,
the time was the Second Month,
the tenth night of the Second Month,

---

187. Hongmen shield. In 206 B.C.E. at Hongmen, in China's Shangxi Province, Fan Guai used a shield to protect his master Gaozi (founder of the Han dynasty). The implication is that Benkei's efforts to protect his master, Yoshitsune, have failed.

188. This passage is laced with words associated with clothing: *tate* (shield/warp), *yabure* (torn), *himo* (days/thread), *haru* (stretch/distant). Koshiji is another name for Hokurikudō, the provinces along the Japan Sea coast in central Honshu.

189. Ise no Saburō Yoshimori, Suruga no Jirō Kiyoshige, Kataoka no Hachirō Hirotsune, Mashio no Jūrō Gonnokami Kanefusa, Hitachibō Kaison, and Musashibō Benkei. All are mentioned in *Gikeiki* as having accompanied Yoshitsune on his flight to the north.

Material com direitos autorais

when we left the capital as the moon rose over it.
  Here we are,
  where those who go and those returning part,
  those who go and those returning part,
  and friends and strangers both
  meet at Meeting Mountain,[190]
hidden now
by haze of hateful spring, by haze of hateful spring.[191]
(*sage-uta*) On the distant wave path
goes the boat,
on the distant wave path
goes the boat,
arriving now at Kaizu Bay.[192]
Clouds in the eastern sky
brighten quickly as we travel
to Mount Arachi,
where the grasses color
in the morning sun.[193]
(*age-uta*) To the Sea of Kei
where the gods have long dwelt
within sacred fences of pine,
and across Mount Kinome
we go and see before us
Mount Soma woodcutters
at Itadori, and shallow rapids
at Asoozu, and at river's end,
Mikuni Harbor
with its reeds and grassy moors
swaying in waves before the gale,
the blossom's enemy,

---

190. Seminaru, *Gosenshū*, Miscellaneous 1, no. 1089: "Here we are, where those who go and those returning part, and friends and strangers both meet at Meeting Barrier." The "Meeting Barrier" (Ōsaka no seki), a reminder of the beloved capital, is now hidden from Yoshitsune and his retainers by spring haze.

191. Oto, *Kokinshū*, Travel, no. 413: "Composed on the road from Azuma to the capital: Hiding the mountains, the haze of spring is hateful. Where, I wonder, is the border of the capital?"

192. Kaizu Bay is a harbor on the north shore of Lake Biwa and the beginning of a road that led across Mount Arachi in Echizen Province (now Fukui Prefecture) to the port town of Tsuruga. *Gikeiki* relates that Yoshitsune's party had difficulty passing the barrier at Mount Arachi.

193. Kakinomoto no Hitomaro, *Shinkokinshū*, Winter, no. 657 (a variant of *Man'yōshū*, no. 2331): "On Yata Moor the grasses color. Mount Arachi: the light snow on the peak is surely cold."

Material com direitos autorais

Returning to the stage, he kneels in front of Benkei. In the meantime, Yoshitsune has finished disguising himself as the carrier.

(*mondō*) Reporting, sir. I have been to see the barrier.

The many temporary structures there will not be easy for our lord to pass through. Also, I saw something resembling a row of crows beside the barrier house. When I asked what they were, I was told they are yamabushi heads! Feeling pity for them, I composed a poem.

BENKEI: What did you compose?

CARRIER:

The yamabushi
blew on their conch shells
as they ran away.
Who caught them and did this?
Abira unken.

BENKEI: You are a clever fellow. Follow behind our lord.

CARRIER: Yes, sir. (*Sits at the* kyōgen *seat.*)

BENKEI: Let us be on our way. (*All stand.*)

(*kakeai*) As they say, you cannot hide (*Looks at Yoshitsune.*)
a safflower in a green garden.[196]

RETAINERS:

But surely their eyes will not
linger on a carrier, and so
shedding his hempen robes
and donning coarser hemp,

BENKEI:

taking up the carrier's box,

YOSHITSUNE:

Yoshitsune rests it on his shoulders,

RETAINERS:

and the box, rain gear, and other boxes.

YOSHITSUNE:

Face hidden by a sedge hat,

RETAINERS:

leaning on a diamond staff,[197]

---

196. A proverb: Just as a bright red blossom stands out in green surroundings, Yoshitsune will be conspicuous unless carefully disguised.

197. *Kongōzue*, octagonal staffs used by yamabushi.

Material com direitos autorais

YOSHITSUNE:

as a weary carrier, (*Takes several steps.*)

CHORUS:

(*uta*) he totters forth,
piteous indeed.

BENKEI: (*mondō*) (*quietly, to Yoshitsune*) Follow behind us, my lord. (*Forcefully, to Retainers*) Everyone. Now we shall pass through the barrier.

HEAD RETAINER: Yes, sir.

Benkei and Retainers line up, move to the bridgeway, then turn back to face the stage. Yoshitsune sits at the stage attendant position. Togashi and his Sword-Bearer move to the waki spot and sit.

SWORD-BEARER (*rises, looks at the bridgeway, then kneels in front of Togashi*): Reporting, my lord. A large group of yamabushi wish to pass.

TOGASHI: What did you say? A large group of yamabushi wish to pass? I see.

Togashi stands with Sword-Bearer. Benkei has entered the stage; Retainers remain in a line on the bridgeway.

TOGASHI: Traveling monks! This is a barrier station.

BENKEI (*stops at the shite spot*): Yes, my lord. Traveling monks have been dispatched to the provinces to solicit donations for the reconstruction of the Great Eastern Temple in the Southern Capital.[198] We have been assigned to the Hokuriku provinces[199] and so have come this way. Please make a contribution.

TOGASHI: I should like to make a contribution to this most unusual cause. This barrier station has been established, however, for the sole purpose of detaining yamabushi.

BENKEI: And what is the reason for that? (*Feigns surprise.*)

TOGASHI: I shall explain. Since differences have arisen between Yoritomo and Yoshitsune, the Lieutenant and eleven of his retainers have disguised themselves as yamabushi and, having enlisted Hidehira's support,[200] are on their way to the northern provinces. Learning of this, Yoritomo has established new barrier stations in various provinces and ordered that all yamabushi be

198. Tōdai-ji, in Nara (south of Kyoto), was established by Emperor Shōmu in the mid-eighth century. Most of the buildings were burned in 1180 during a battle between the Taira clan and warrior-monks of nearby Kōfuku-ji.

199. The seven central provinces along the Japan Sea, corresponding to today's Fukui, Ishikawa, Toyama, and Niigata Prefectures.

200. Fujiwara no Hidehira, who governed the northern province of Mutsu from Hiraizumi (in today's Iwate Prefecture), held out against Yoritomo's hegemony.

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detained. Accordingly, I have been appointed to this place and am stopping all yamabushi. Since you are a particularly large group, I shall not let even one of you pass.

BENKEI: I see. But he ordered you to stop false yamabushi, did he not? Surely he did not say that you should detain real yamabushi.

SWORD-BEARER (*hotly*): Yesterday we cut down three yamabushi!

BENKEI: And was the Lieutenant among the yamabushi you cut down?

TOGASHI: Your questions annoy me and serve no purpose. I have already decided not to let even one of you pass.

BENKEI: Then you plan to execute us, as well.

TOGASHI: Yes.

BENKEI (*calmly, faces the audience*): What an astonishing turn of events.

We have come to a most inauspicious place. There is no help for it. (*To Togashi*) Let us begin our last services and go meekly to our execution.

TOGASHI: Very well.

BENKEI (*to retainers, who are still on the bridgeway*): All of you draw near.

To notto *music, Benkei and Retainers take prayer beads from their sleeves as they prepare to perform their service. Retainers enter the stage and sit in a V formation behind Benkei.*

BENKEI:

(*unnamed*) Now we begin our final service.
A yamabushi follows in the Way
of En the *upasaka*[201]

RETAINERS:

and assumes the sacred form of Acala,[202]

BENKEI:

his cap the Jeweled Crown of the Five Wisdoms,[203]

RETAINERS:

its pleats representing the Twelve Causes,[204]

---

201. En no Ozuno, better known as En no Gyōja (En the Ascetic), was the eighth-century founder of the tradition of mountain asceticism practiced by yamabushi. An *upasaka* (J. *ubasoku*) is a layman who has accepted the five basic Buddhist prohibitions (against killing, stealing, licentiousness, prevarication, and alcohol) and entered the Buddhist Way.

202. Acala (J. Fudō Myōō), regarded as an incarnation of the Mahavairocana Buddha (J. Dainichi Nyorai), is depicted with a fierce expression, grasping a sword, and wreathed in flames.

203. The crown worn by the Mahavairocana Buddha.

204. The Twelve Causes refers to the Buddhist doctrine of karmic cause and effect, which involves twelve causal links of "codependent origination" (*pratiya-samutpada*) leading to suffering and rebirth.

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BENKEI:
his persimmon-color hempen robe
the nine-part mandala,[205]
RETAINERS:
his black leggings the Womb;[206]
BENKEI:
and his eight-holed sandals
RETAINERS:
tread on the eight-petaled lotus.
BENKEI:
Breathing out and in he chants
the two letters A and *Un*.[207]
RETAINERS:
The yamabushi's body is the Buddha's body.
BENKEI:
If you strike him here,
RETAINERS:
who knows how Acala might react?
BENKEI:
That the Yuya Avatar[208] will punish you
RETAINERS:
on the spot
BENKEI:
is beyond any doubt.

Benkei forms a mudra with his fingers while Retainers rub their beads in prayer.

CHORUS:
(*uta*) "*Om abira unken!*"
They rub their beads, making a rattling sound.
TOGASHI: (*mondō*) That was most praiseworthy. Earlier I heard you say that you are soliciting donations for the Great Eastern Temple in the Southern

---

205. The Diamond-World Mandala.

206. The Womb-World, associated, like the Diamond World, with the Mahavairocana Buddha.

207. The first and last letters of the Sanskrit alphabet (Skt. *a hum*). In Esoteric Buddhism, *a* (uttered as an in breath, with the mouth open) and *Un* (as an out breath, with the mouth closed) are regarded as embodying the fundamental cause and effect of all phenomena.

208. The Shinto god enshrined at Kumano, venerated by yamabushi.

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that fell like strings of jade,
he turned his thoughts to the Good Path[214]
and built the Vairocana Buddha. (*Forcefully, at a faster tempo.*)
Lamenting that such a miraculous place
should cease to exist,[215]
Shunjōbō Chōgen[216]
seeks donations from the provinces.
One slip of paper,
one half-coin—
he who offers just this much
in this world will enjoy
pleasure beyond compare,
and in future lives will surely sit
on countless lotus blooms.[217]
Placing his faith in the Buddha,
bowing his head in worship,
humbly has Chōgen written this."
So he reads,
as if to shake the skies. (*Lifts the scroll reverently.*)

TOGASHI:
(*uta*) The men of the barrier,
losing their courage and
overcome with awe,
let them all pass,
overcome with awe,
let them all pass.

Benkei rolls up the scroll and faces Togashi.

TOGASHI: (*mondō*) Pass through quickly!
BENKEI: Yes, my lord.

He moves to the bridgeway, where the Retainers rise and follow him. Benkei goes as far as the third pine; the Retainers stand behind him in a line on the bridgeway. Sword-Bearer moves to center stage and looks at Yoshitsune, then kneels in front of Togashi.

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214. The path of Buddhism. The giant bronze statue of the Vairocana Buddha (the *daibutsu*) at Tōdai-ji was dedicated in 749.

215. Because of the fire of 1180.

216. The monk Chōgen was appointed by the emperor to take charge of reconstructing Tōdai-ji.

217. That is, will be reborn in Amida Buddha's Western Paradise.

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SWORD-BEARER: Reporting, my lord. The Lieutenant is passing through.
TOGASHI: I see.

Yoshitsune has entered the stage and stands at center stage. Togashi rises with his hand on his sword and glares at Yoshitsune. Sword-Bearer also stands.

Stop that carrier!

Startled, Yoshitsune withdraws to the shite spot and kneels.

RETAINERS:
Oh! For our lord to be suspected
is a matter of life and death.
With this they all go back.

BENKEI (*runs from the third pine back to the head of the line*): Wait, do not spoil our plans in your haste. (*Angrily, to Yoshitsune*) Miserable carrier, why do you not pass? (*Reenters the stage.*)

TOGASHI: I have stopped him.

BENKEI: And why is that? (*Stands behind Yoshitsune.*)

TOGASHI: I have stopped the carrier because he bears a slight resemblance to someone.

BENKEI: It is not unusual for one person to resemble another. Whom does he resemble?

TOGASHI: One of my men says that he resembles the Lieutenant, and so I shall detain him until the matter is settled.

BENKEI: What? He says that this carrier resembles the Lieutenant?

TOGASHI: Yes.

BENKEI (*to Yoshitsune, roughly*): What an astonishing turn of events! For a lowly carrier like you to resemble the Lieutenant is the event of a lifetime! How infuriating! I hoped that we could reach the province of Noto before sundown, but you lag behind because of a little box and so bring suspicion on us. (*Approaches Yoshitsune.*) I had been thinking what a wretch you were, and now I will show you a thing or two. (*Seizing Yoshitsune's staff, he strikes him on the hat several times and pushes him back.*) I'll take this staff and beat you and beat you! Pass on through! (*Togashi follows Yoshitsune suspiciously. Benkei glares at him.*) You must be robbers, the way you eye his box.

Retainers rush onstage and form two lines, facing Togashi. During the following age-uta, *Benkei, holding his staff horizontally, restrains Retainers as they press toward Togashi.*

CHORUS:
(*age-uta*) "Why do these men
why do these men

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should be fairly judged by the gods and buddhas,
but do they now exist in this world?
Hateful is this world of sadness,
O hateful is this world of sadness!

Togashi goes to the bridgeway and stands at the second pine, with Sword-Bearer at the first pine.

TOGASHI: (*mondō*) Is anyone there?

SWORD-BEARER (*kneels*): I am before you, my lord.

TOGASHI: I feel ashamed of the way I spoke to those yamabushi. I hope to catch up with them and offer them some saké. You go ahead and ask them to stop.

SWORD-BEARER: Yes, my lord. (*Stands and turns toward the stage.*)

There they are. An invitation! (*Carrier goes to meet him.*) Because the keeper of the barrier station was so rude to you a little while ago, he wishes to offer you some saké. I have come to tell you this.

CARRIER: I understand. Please wait while I deliver your message.

(*To Benkei*) Reporting, sir. Saying that he feels ashamed for having spoken rudely before, the keeper of the barrier station has had saké brought to us.

BENKEI: What an astonishing turn of events. Well then, I shall greet him.

CARRIER: Is the gentleman here?

SWORD-BEARER: He is here.

CARRIER: I delivered your message and was told that he is welcome.

SWORD-BEARER: I shall tell him. (*Kneels in front of Togashi.*) He asks that you come this way.

TOGASHI: Very well.

Enters the stage and sits at the waki spot. Sword-Bearer leaves the stage through the side door.

TOGASHI: Because I was so rude before, I have brought some local saké for you.

BENKEI: Please come this way.

(*unnamed*) I see, I see. He intends to float our spirits in a saké cup and put us in a good mood. On this occasion, too, everyone, do not let down your guard, (*Faces Retainers.*)

CHORUS:

(*dan-uta*) lest you be suspected. Each of them
having been warned by Benkei, they sit in a circle
in the mountain shadow, their home for now—
Let us drink this chrysanthemum saké,[229]
here on the mountain path.

229. That is, auspicious saké.

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BENKEI:

How delightful! In mountain waters,

CHORUS:

How delightful! In mountain waters
we float our saké cups and they are caught
in the current, as in the Winding Waters.[230]
Waving my obstructing sleeves
I shall dance a dance.
Benkei was a monk at the Three Pagodas,[231]
accomplished in the arts. These are the verses sung
at the longevity dance:[232]
"This mountain water
echoing on the rocks—

BENKEI:

(*waka*) the roar is a waterfall." (*Sits in front of Togashi.*)
(*unnamed*) I am quite drunk. Let me pour for you this time.

TOGASHI: I will have some, then. Even better, do a dance to accompany the saké.

BENKEI: Yes, my lord.

CHORUS:

(*waka*) "The roar is a waterfall.

(*Dance*: otoko-mai)

Benkei performs a vigorous otoko-mai *dance. He continues dancing as the text resumes.*

BENKEI:

(*waka*) "The roar is a waterfall.

CHORUS:

(*nori-ji*) "Even when the sun is shining,
it always roars, it always roars."
Rise quickly, quickly (*Looks at Retainers.*)

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230. "Winding Waters" (Kyokusui) was a courtly event in which cups were floated on a winding stream. Each courtier in turn composed a Chinese verse before a cup reached him, then picked up the cup and drank. These lines allude to a line by Sugawara no Masanori, *Wakan rōeishū*, no. 42: "It catches in the current and rushes along, and so he obstructs it with his hand." The line describes a courtier who has not thought of a verse before the cup reaches him.

231. East Pagoda, West Pagoda, and Yokawa, the three parts of Enryaku-ji temple, on Mount Hiei. Benkei was said to have once lived at the West Pagoda.

232. *Ennen no mai*, an entertainment held at certain temples, such as Enryaku-ji, after major services. The following lines are from a popular song.

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and like your bowstrings
slacken not your guard.
Keepers of the barrier station, (*Kneels, facing Togashi.*)
we shall take our leave, farewell.
He picks up the carrier's box (*Stands.*)
and throws it on his shoulders,
and feeling as though they had tread on the tiger's tail
and escaped the serpent's mouth,[233]
they head onward, down to the Province of Mutsu.[234]

[Translated by Anthony H. Chambers]

ZEAMI

TEACHINGS ON STYLE AND THE FLOWER (*FŪSHIKADEN*, 1402)

One of the key aesthetic concepts that Zeami (1363?–1443?) developed is the "flower" (*hana*), a symbol he used for the "charm that seizes the audience" in nō performances. In *Teachings on Style and the Flower*, Zeami distinguishes between the Passing Flower (*jibun no hana*) and the True Flower (*makoto no hana*). The Passing Flower represents the beauty of youth, the audience's attraction to the beauty of a young actor's voice or physical appearance. This Passing Flower, however, is lost as the actor grows and his voice and body changes. The actor reaches his physical peak at thirty-four or thirty-five, and his physical powers decline after forty. The flower that does not fade after forty-four or even after fifty years of age is the True Flower, whose effect is not related to the strength and flexibility of a youthful body, to the qualities of the Passing Flower. In the last section here, Zeami writes about the flower as a technique for arousing the interest of the audience. The second section focuses on the issue of miming and the need to remain elegant.

Book 1: Items Concerning the Practice of Nō in Relation to the Age of the Actor

FROM THE TWELFTH OR THIRTEENTH YEAR

From this age onward, the voice begins to achieve its proper pitch, and the actor can begin to comprehend nō. Therefore, various aspects of the art can

233. Treading on the tiger's tail represents a dangerous situation, and escaping the serpent's mouth signifies getting away safely.

234. That is, to Hidehira's headquarters in Hiraizumi.

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now be explained. In the first place, a boy's appearance, no matter in what aspect, produces the sensation of *yūgen* (elegance and grace). And his voice at this age always sounds charming as well. Because of those two strong points, any defects can be hidden, and the good points can be made all the more evident. . . . With the appearance and voice of a child, if a boy actor shows skill in his performance, he can hardly give a bad impression. Still, this Flower is not the true Flower. It is only a temporary bloom. . . .

THIRTY-FOUR OR THIRTY-FIVE YEARS

This age represents the peak of perfection in our art. If an actor grasps the various items set down here and masters them, he will truly be acknowledged by the public and will achieve a reputation as a great actor. If such public recognition does not come, however, and he does not obtain such a reputation, then no matter how skillful the actor may be, he must recognize that he is not one who has yet found the True Flower. And if he has not obtained such a Flower by this time, his art will begin to decline when he is forty. . . .

FIFTY YEARS OLD AND LATER

. . . My late father died at the age of fifty-two on the nineteenth of the Fifth Month (of 1384), and on the fourth day of that same month, he performed the nō in connection with religious services at the Sengen Shrine in the province of Suruga. The performances that day were particularly colorful, and all the spectators, high ranking and commoners alike, praised his performances. At that time the various plays were given over to the younger actors, and he performed a few easy roles in a modest way. Yet the beauty of his Flower was all the more striking. For when an artist has achieved a True Flower, then the art of the nō, even if the foliage is slight and the tree grows old, still retains its blooms. This is the very proof that even in an ancient frame, the Flower remains.

What has been written above constitutes the appropriate stages of nō training at various ages.

Book 2: Various Items Concerning Role Playing

It would be impossible to describe in writing all the various aspects of role playing (*monomane*).[235] Yet because this skill forms the fundamental basis of

235. The term used by Zeami to indicate the movements and sentiments appropriate to the world performance of a particular role in the nō. The word *monomane* literally means "mimicry," so Zeami did not mean a naturalistic acting style. Instead, he stressed that the essential spirit of the role was to be the object of the actor's art.

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the body will become the substance [*tai*] and the emotion its function [*yū*],[236] thus moving the audience. . . .

Section 12: Entering the Realm of *Yūgen*

The aesthetic quality of *yūgen* [elegance and grace][237] is considered the highest ideal of perfection in many arts. Particularly in nō, yūgen can be regarded as the highest principle. However, although the quality of yūgen is manifested in performance and audiences give it high appreciation, few actors in fact possess that quality. This is because they have never had a taste of the real yūgen themselves. So it is that few actors have entered this world.

What kind of realm is represented by what is termed yūgen? For example, if we take the general appearance of the world and observe the various sorts of people who live there, we might say that yūgen is best represented in the character of the nobility, whose deportment is of such a high quality and who receive affection and respect not given to others in society. If such is the case, then their dignified appearance represents the essence of yūgen. Therefore, the stage appearance of yūgen is best indicated by their refined and elegant carriage. If an actor examines closely the nobility's beautiful way of speaking and studies the words and habitual means of expression that such elevated persons use, even observing their tasteful choice of language when saying the smallest things, such can be taken to represent the yūgen of speech. . . .

An actor must come to grasp those various types of yūgen and absorb them within himself; for no matter what kind of role he may assume, he must never separate himself from the virtue of yūgen. No matter what the role—whether the actor be of high or low rank, a man, a woman, a priest or lay person, a farmer or country person, even a beggar or an outcast—it should seem as though each were holding a branch of flowers in his hand. In this one respect they exhibit the same appeal, despite whatever differences they may show in their social positions. This Flower represents the beauty of their stance in nō; and the ability to reveal this kind of stance in performance represents, of course, its spirit. In order to study the yūgen of words, the actor must study the art of composing poetry; and to study the yūgen of physical appearance, he must study the aesthetic qualities of elegant costume, so that in every aspect of his art, no matter how the role may change, he will always maintain one aspect in his performance that shows yūgen. Such it is to know the seed of yūgen. . . .

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236. Substance (*tai*), which literally means "body" or "essence," is the fundamental element of the performance, and function (*yū*) is the derivative element arising from the substance of the performance.

237. Zeami uses the word *yūgen*, which originally meant "deep and mysterious," to represent the epitome of elegance and grace suggested by the behavior and dress of court ladies. In waka, the term has significant overtones of "mystery and depth."

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Characters in Order of Appearance

MASTER, a wealthy man	*ado*/side role
TARŌ, his servant	*shite*/lead role
JIRŌ, his servant	*ado*/side role

The Master, Tarō, and Jirō enter down the bridgeway, or hashigakari. *The Master goes to the shite spot, and his two servants kneel down side by side about eight feet behind him.*

MASTER: I am a man who lives in this area. Today I must go over the mountains on business. Now I will call my two servants and order them to look after the house while I am away. (*Walking to the waki spot*) Hey, hey, the both of you, come here!

TARŌ AND JIRŌ: Yeeeees. (*They rise and go to the shite spot, standing on either side of it, facing the Master, who is at the waki spot.*)

MASTER: Are you there?

TARŌ AND JIRŌ: We both are at your service.

MASTER: I didn't call you about anything special. I have to go over the mountains on a little business, and I want you to look after the house while I'm away.

TARŌ: Wait. I'll go with you, so have Jirō look after the house.

JIRŌ: No, no, I'll go with you, so have Tarō look after the house.

MASTER: No, today my business is such that I need neither of you to accompany me. Now both of you wait here.

TARŌ AND JIRŌ: Yes, sir.

MASTER (*speaks his next line while going to the stage assistant, picking up a large, lidded, cylindrical lacquer barrel, and carrying it to downstage center, where he places it*): This is poison, so take special care when you guard the house. (*He returns to the waki spot.*)

TARŌ: In that case both of us . . . right?

JIRŌ: Right . . .

TARŌ AND JIRŌ: Will go with you.

MASTER: And why is that?

TARŌ: After all, if that *person* will watch the house while you're gone, no one else . . . right?

JIRŌ: Right . . .

TARŌ AND JIRŌ: Is needed to guard the house.

MASTER: You both have terrible ears. I didn't say "person," I said "poison." This is Busu, a poison so deadly that if a breeze blows over it and even a whiff of it reaches your noses, you will die instantly. Be aware of this and guard it carefully.

TARŌ: In that case, we'll do as you command.

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JIRŌ: I have one small question.

MASTER: And what is that?

JIRŌ: Well, if this Busu is so deadly that even a whiff is fatal, how is it that *you* are able to handle it?

TARŌ: You asked a very good question.

JIRŌ: I sure did.

MASTER: Your uncertainty is most reasonable. This poison is the Master's treasured possession, and as long as I touch it, it will do no harm. But if you two come anywhere near, it will kill you for sure. So be aware of this while you guard the house.

TARŌ: In that case . . .

TARŌ AND JIRŌ: We will do as you command.

MASTER: Well, I'm going now.

TARŌ AND JIRŌ: Are you going already?

MASTER: I'm counting on you to look after the house.

TARŌ: Don't worry about the house, we'll take good care of everything. Please take your time . . .

TARŌ AND JIRŌ: And enjoy yourself while you are away.

MASTER: I'm depending on you. I'm depending on you. (*The Master exits down the bridgeway, and the two servants turn to watch him leave.*)

TARŌ: My, he sure left in a hurry.

JIRŌ: You're right. He sure left in a hurry.

TARŌ: First of all, let's sit down.

JIRŌ: Right.

TARŌ AND JIRŌ: *Ei ei yattona.* (*Uttering this expression of physical effort, they sit alongside each other upstage, facing straight out at the barrel and the audience.*)

TARŌ: Actually, what I said to Master about wanting to go with him was a lie. Really, staying at home and guarding the house is a lot easier than working, isn't it?

JIRŌ: You're right. Nothing is easier than what we're doing right now.

TARŌ (*slapping the stage and then running down the bridgeway*): Quick, run away, run away!

JIRŌ (*following Tarō*): What happened, what happened?

TARŌ: Just now there was a cold breeze blowing from the direction of the Busu.

JIRŌ: That's pretty scary.

TARŌ: Let's move a little farther away from it.

JIRŌ: Good idea.

TARŌ: Around here would be good.

JIRŌ: Right.

TARŌ AND JIRŌ: *Ei ei yattona.* (*They sit side by side on a diagonal line in front of the flute position, facing the corner pillar.*)

Material com direitos autorais

JIRŌ: Fan hard, fan hard!
TARŌ: I'm fanning, I'm fanning!
JIRŌ: All right, I'm ready to take the lid off, so fan with all your might!
TARŌ: Right.
JIRŌ: Fan hard, fan hard!
TARŌ: I'm fanning, I'm fanning!
JIRŌ: Quick, run away, run away!
TARŌ: What happened, what happened?
JIRŌ: I got the lid off.
TARŌ: That's a relief.
JIRŌ: Why do you say that?
TARŌ: If something alive were inside it would have jumped out. At least we know it's not something alive.
JIRŌ: It might be playing possum, you know.
TARŌ: It's scary, but I'm going to go look at what's inside.
JIRŌ: That's a good idea.
TARŌ: You help me fan the breeze the other way with all your might, OK?
JIRŌ: Right.
TARŌ: Fan hard, fan hard!
JIRŌ: I'm fanning, I'm fanning! (*Tarō takes the lead position with Jirō following.*)
TARŌ: Fan hard, fan hard!
JIRŌ: I'm fanning, I'm fanning!
TARŌ: I'm ready to look in now. Keep fanning with all your might.
JIRŌ: Right.
TARŌ: Fan hard, fan hard!
JIRŌ: I'm fanning, I'm fanning!
TARŌ: Quick, run away, run away!
JIRŌ: What happened, what happened?
TARŌ: You know what? It's brown and sticky, and looks delicious!
JIRŌ: What's that? It looks delicious?
TARŌ: That's right.
JIRŌ: In that case, I'll go take a look too. You help me fan with all your might.
TARŌ: Right.
JIRŌ: Fan hard, fan hard!
TARŌ: I'm fanning, I'm fanning! (*Jirō takes the lead position, with Tarō following.*)
JIRŌ: Fan hard, fan hard!
TARŌ: I'm fanning, I'm fanning!
JIRŌ: Fan hard, fan hard!
TARŌ: I'm fanning, I'm fanning!
JIRŌ: Quick, run away, run away!
TARŌ: What happened, what happened?
JIRŌ: Just like you said, it looks delicious.

Material com direitos autorais

TARŌ: You know what? Suddenly, I want to eat that Busu. I'll go eat it up.

JIRŌ: What's the matter with you? That's a poison so deadly a breeze passing over it will kill you. How do you think you can eat it?

TARŌ: Maybe I've been possessed by the Busu because I have a terrible craving for it. I'll go eat it up!

JIRŌ: Wait! As long as I'm by your side, I won't let you go. (*He seizes Tarō's sleeve.*)

TARŌ: Let go of me!

JIRŌ: I won't let go!

TARŌ: I'm telling you to let go!

JIRŌ: And I say I won't! (*Tarō shakes loose from Jirō's grip and sings as he approaches the barrel.*)

TARŌ:

Casting off my darling's sleeves I bid farewell . . .
And approach the deadly Busu poison.

JIRŌ: Oh, no, you've gone near the Busu! Now you're doomed!

Tarō kneels on one knee behind the bucket. He sticks the bamboo handle of his closed fan into the barrel, stirs, and then says the following as he mimes eating a sticky substance off the handle of his fan.

TARŌ: *Ahm ahm ahm ahm.*

JIRŌ: Oh no! You're eating the Busu. Now you are truly doomed!

TARŌ: Ooooh, I'm dying. (*Tarō strikes his forehead with his left hand and slumps forward.*)

JIRŌ (*runs to Tarō's side and supports him*): Tarō, what happened? Pull yourself together.

TARŌ (*in apparent pain*): Who is it, who is it?

JIRŌ: It's me, Jirō.

TARŌ (*gleefully*): Hey, Jirō.

JIRŌ: What happened?

TARŌ: It's so *delicious*, I'm dying.

JIRŌ: What's that? It's delicious?

TARŌ: Yes.

JIRŌ: So what is the poisonous Busu?

TARŌ: Here, take a look, it's *sugar!*

JIRŌ: Let me see it. It really *is* sugar!

TARŌ: So, let's dig in!

JIRŌ: Right you are.

TARŌ AND JIRŌ (*stirring with closed fans, then miming eating the sugar off the handles*): *Ahm ahm ahm ahm.*

TARŌ: Well, well, isn't it delicious?

Material com direitos autorais

I don't think he will be very pleased about it. When the Master comes home, I'm going to tell him right away.

JIRŌ: Hey, wait, wait! It was *you* who first looked at the Busu and first ate the Busu, and when the Master comes home, I'll tell him about it right away.

TARŌ: Now wait, wait! What I just said was a joke.

JIRŌ: You shouldn't be telling bad jokes like that. So, what should we do for an excuse?

TARŌ (*pointing to the right of the waki pillar*): Tear up that hanging scroll.

JIRŌ: What? If I rip it up, will it give us an excuse?

TARŌ: Oh, it will, it will!

JIRŌ: In that case, I'll tear it up. (*He goes to the right of the waki pillar, where, to the following vocalization, he mimes pulling down a scroll, ripping it up, and throwing the pieces away.*) *Zarrari, zarrari, bassari!* There, I've ripped it to shreds.

TARŌ: What?! You just did something fine again.

JIRŌ: What do you mean?

TARŌ: Now it's true that I was the first to see and the first to eat the Busu. But because the Master treasures that scroll more than any other, I don't think he'll be pleased when he sees it ripped up like that. When he returns, I'll tell him right away just who it was that ripped it up.

JIRŌ: Hey, what do you mean?! It was you who told me to rip it up, and when the Master returns, I'll tell him about it right away.

TARŌ: Now wait, wait! That was another joke.

JIRŌ: How many times do I have to tell you this is no time for bad jokes. Now what's our excuse?

TARŌ: Smash that huge Chinese vase. (*He points in the direction of the corner pillar.*)

JIRŌ: I'm not going to do anything you tell me anymore.

TARŌ: And why is that?

JIRŌ: You'll tell on me, right? (*Both laugh.*)

TARŌ: So, let's get together, and *both* smash it.

JIRŌ: That's a good idea.

TARŌ: Come over here.

JIRŌ: Right. (*They walk downstage, to the left of the corner pillar.*)

TARŌ AND JIRŌ (*they crouch down together and mime lifting a heavy object*): *Ei ei yattona.*

TARŌ: For this we need three lifts, and on the third we'll let it go.

JIRŌ: Right.

TARŌ AND JIRŌ: *Iiiiyaaaa. Eiii.*

TARŌ: That was one.

TARŌ AND JIRŌ: *Iiiiyaaaa. Eiii.*

JIRŌ: That was two.

Material com direitos autorais

TARŌ: We knew we had no right to live, and so we hoped to kill ourselves by eating the Busu. Right, Jirō?

JIRŌ: Riiiiiight!

TARŌ AND JIRŌ (*singing*):

We took one mouthful
But we did not die.
Two mouthfuls, and still we did not die.
Three mouthfuls, four mouthfuls, five mouthfuls,
Ten mouthfuls and more. (*They begin dancing.*)
We ate up all the Busu
And still we could not die.
Destined to live, what lucky fellows!
Aren't we sturdy guys?

Tarō and Jirō end the dance by striking the head of the standing Master with their open fans. They then run off stage, down the bridgeway.

MASTER: What do you mean, "sturdy guys"? You rascals! I'll get you, I'll get you.

TARŌ AND JIRŌ (*exiting down the bridgeway*): Please forgive us, forgive us!

MASTER (*chasing the servants and exiting down the bridgeway*): Where are you going? Someone stop them please! I'll get you, I'll get you!

[Introduction and translation by Laurence Kominz]

THE THUNDER GOD (*KAMINARI*)

The Thunder God is a typical example of a kyōgen play that debunks and humanizes a deity, but it also pokes fun at the medical profession. By the end, however, the action reaffirms the power of the god and the efficacy of the doctor. The thunder god of traditional children's stories is a cherubic, half-naked child who wears a tiger skin; religious sculptures depict him as a muscle-bound prodigy, banging a ring of drums that surround his body like a huge halo. The nō drama *Kamo* depicts the thunder god as the provider of life-giving rain and the protector of the people.[240] Kyōgen performers probably had this latter image in mind when they created *The Thunder God*.

In the traditional kyōgen play, the thunder god wears a mask, as do all supernatural beings in nō and kyōgen. Thunder god masks, which have bulging eyes, a wide flaring

240. For a translation of the nō play *Kamo*, see Karen W. Brazell, ed., *Traditional Japanese Theater: An Anthology of Plays* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998).

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nose, and tightly closed lips, are more comic than ferocious, but they convey the tremendous energy of the god. The actor also wears a long, red wig, sometimes with a small cap on his head. The thunder god's costume is in bright, clashing colors, often red, green, gold, and black. A small drum is tied to his waist in front, which he beats with two small drumsticks. The actor represents thunder vocally by shouting, "Garari, garari, garari." He shouts "Pikkari" for lightning flashes and leaps up in the air, arms and legs akimbo. The actor himself becomes a zigzagging thunderbolt. The thunder god speaks in a powerful voice and exaggerates his feelings of joy, anger, fear, and pain.

The doctor is dull and meek, quaking to the thunder god's flashy bravado. The doctor becomes energetic and self-confident only when administering the needle treatment and haggling over his fee. His needles look like railroad spikes, and he drives them home with a mallet, an absurd exaggeration of actual acupuncture treatment. While he drives in his needles, the thunder god lies on his side, jerking his arms and legs to the hammer's rhythm, like a fallen windup toy soldier.

The doctor sits at the side of the stage to watch the thunder god's closing dance, and it is this dance that affirms the power of the god and the skill of the doctor. The dance includes a bow of gratitude to the doctor and several leaps and kicks that represent the god flying back into the sky. So virile and auspicious is this closing dance that it is sometimes performed at celebratory occasions, such as the openings of buildings and weddings. The play belongs to the demon/mountain priest (*oni/yamabushi*) category, probably because the thunder god mask is demonic in appearance.

Puns usually are difficult to convey in translation. When the thunder god first spies the doctor and asks who he is, the doctor replies that he is an "*ishi*" (meaning either "doctor" or "stone" in Japanese) and Thunder replies, "A stone? Since when do stones talk?" The translator here has replaced the *ishi/ishi* (stone/doctor) pun with a "quack/quack" pun.

Characters in Order of Appearance

QUACK DOCTOR	*ado*/side role: plain, monkish (gray, brown, or black) clothes, with a tight-fitting skullcap
THUNDER GOD	*shite*/lead role: mask, red wig, bright costume, small drum on waist

DOCTOR (*enters along the bridgeway, proceeds to the shite spot, and sings*):

A quack doctor with no medicine, a quack doctor with no medicine,
how I wish I had a cure-all elixir.

(*Speaks*) I am a doctor who lives in the capital. These days there are many doctors in the capital so skillful they're nicknamed "Healing Buddhas," so that quack doctors like me aren't even asked to take a pulse. Now I am on

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my way to the East Country because I've heard that there aren't enough doctors there. I'll continue on my way. (*Walks around the stage once as he speaks, indicating travel.*) These days everyone seems to be flocking to the flowery capital. I wish I didn't have to leave the capital and go east, but this is the only way I can make a living so I have no choice in the matter. Well look, I've come out on a wide open plain. I wonder what plain this is? Look, suddenly the sky is clouding up, and thunder is beginning to rumble. *PIKKARI!* (Flash!) (*Jumps up in the air when he shouts "pikkari" and lands on his right knee with a crash. He covers his ears with his hands.*) Help, help, help! I'd better get out of here quick. I'll head for a village. (*Runs toward the entrance curtain, shouting.*) I hope nothing bad happens before I reach a village.

THUNDER (*enters along the bridgeway and chases the Doctor around the stage once, shouting. He leaps up and waves the drumsticks he holds in each hand when he shouts "pikkari" and beats the drum tied to his waist when he shouts "garari"*): *PIKKARI! Garari, garari, garari!* (Flash! Rumble, rumble, rumble!) *PIKKARI! Garari, garari, garari! PIKKARI! Garari, garari, garari! PIKKARI! Garari, garari, garari!*

DOCTOR (*rolls from center stage to the waki seat and kneels, cowering in fear, cradling his bowed head in his hands*): Help, help, help!

THUNDER: *Garari, garari, doh, doh, doh!* (Rumble, rumble, smash, crash!) (*Jumps up in the very center of the stage and lands spread-eagled on his back. He slowly rises and sits in a cross-legged position while speaking the following words.*) Ouch, ooh, ow!

DOCTOR: Help, help, help.

THUNDER (*painfully*): Ooh. (*Composing himself*) I was having a wonderful time thundering today when suddenly I stepped into a hole between two clouds and fell down onto this wide plain. I bumped my hip bone really hard. (*He looks around.*) There isn't even a single tree around I can use to climb back into the sky. What'll I do now? (*He looks down, pondering, then notices the Doctor.*) Hey, what are you?

DOCTOR: I'm a quack.

THUNDER: A what?

DOCTOR: A quack, a quack.

THUNDER: You don't look like a duck.

DOCTOR: No, a quack *doctor* . . . someone who cures people's illnesses.

THUNDER: I see . . . a quack doctor, eh?

DOCTOR: That's right.

THUNDER: Well *I* am the great *thunder god*.

DOCTOR: I am amazed to make your acquaintance.

THUNDER: I was having a wonderful time thundering today when suddenly I stepped into a hole between two clouds and fell down here and injured my

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hip bone. Since you are a doctor who cures people's illnesses, I want you to treat me.

DOCTOR: I've treated humans before, but never a thunder god. I'm afraid I can't.

THUNDER: Don't give me your "humans" and "thunder gods." If you keep that up and don't treat me, I'll RIP YOU APART! Ouch! Ow, ow! (*He rises a little and makes a sudden threatening gesture, but this movement makes his injury more painful.*)

DOCTOR (*terrified*): I'll do it, I'll do it.

THUNDER: Then get to it.

DOCTOR: All right. First I'll have to take your pulse.

THUNDER: What's a pulse?

DOCTOR: You determine human diseases by the pulse in the left and right wrists, but I'll have to take a head pulse for the thunder god.

THUNDER: Since you know so much about it, get over here on the double and start the treatment.

DOCTOR: Yes, sir. But be sure not to make any thunder while I'm there. (*He walks fearfully toward Thunder at center stage.*)

THUNDER: Don't worry, I won't thunder.

DOCTOR: And be sure not to flash any lightning.

THUNDER: I won't flash any lightning.

The Doctor places his right hand on top of Thunder's head, moves Thunder's head in a circle three times, and pushes him gently on his side.

DOCTOR: Wow, you've got quite a fever.

THUNDER: Oh?

DOCTOR: And on top of that, you've got the thunder god's congenital problem, palsy.

THUNDER: Yes, palsy, palsy. I fell so far it caused my palsy to act up.

DOCTOR: Now for this problem, various drugs would do the job, but they're all at home. Since we're on the road like this, I'll have to use the needle treatment.

THUNDER: What are needles?

DOCTOR: These! (*He pulls two railroad spike–size needles from his belt and shows them to Thunder.*)

THUNDER: What are those?

DOCTOR: You stick these in where it hurts.

THUNDER: No way! You think I'll let you stick those awful things in me.

DOCTOR: If human beings can take it, wouldn't the great thunder god be cowardly not to?

THUNDER: You're right. If human beings can take it, there's no way I can't. But do it without causing any pain.

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The doctor (Shigeyama Akira) hammers a needle into the thunder god (Shigeyama Senzaburō). (By permission of the photographer, Fukuda Fumio)

DOCTOR: Be sure not to thunder at me.

THUNDER: I won't thunder.

DOCTOR: Is this where it hurts? (*He kneels down beside Thunder and runs his hands over his side.*)

THUNDER: Yes, it hurts there.

DOCTOR: Does it hurt here too? (*He runs his hands over Thunder's side.*)

THUNDER: Yes, it hurts there too.

DOCTOR: Now I'll apply the needle.

THUNDER: Do it quickly.

The Doctor puts a needle against Thunder's hip, holding it in his left hand and pounding it home with a mallet held in his right hand.

DOCTOR: *Yattona, yattona, yattona!* (Bang, bang, bang!)

THUNDER (*flailing his arms and legs as if running hard*): Ouch, ouch, ouch! Take it out quick, take it out quick!

DOCTOR (*pausing briefly*): If you move like that the needle will bend! (*Resumes pounding the needle.*)

Bang, bang, bang!

THUNDER: Ouch, ouch, ouch! Take it out quick, take it out quick!

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BUAKU: Really? Well, well! How good of you to come and tell me. Indeed I do fish in the river, so I could catch any number of fish for him. Still, to pull up a fish is to take a life. Won't I get in trouble for that?

TARŌ KAJA: Whatever happens, I'll say nothing against you. Hurry now and catch them.

BUAKU: Well, all right then. You wait here for a minute while I fish.

TARŌ KAJA: Ahh! Wait! Stop!

BUAKU: Why?

TARŌ KAJA: I've never seen you catch fish. I want to come along too.

BUAKU: You're coming along?

TARŌ KAJA: Exactly.

BUAKU: Why that's great! All right . . . follow me.

TARŌ KAJA: Yes, of course.

BUAKU: How about one for the road?

TARŌ KAJA: It'll just make us late. Come on. Let's go.

BUAKU: Sure. Now then, I've put up a dam of sorts in the stream where I fish. There're lots of fish trapped there.

TARŌ KAJA: I see. There must be.

BUAKU: Ah ha! We're here already.

TARŌ KAJA: Can there be fish in such a small pool?

BUAKU: Oh yes! Look, look! Over there! Those all are carp.

TARŌ KAJA: Why you're right. There are a whole lot of them. But you haven't brought any kind of net. How'll you catch them?

BUAKU: You're confused. Only natural. I take a bunch of long grass, chase them from one side to the other, and then I grab them. It's easy.

TARŌ KAJA: Can you just scoop them up?

BUAKU: Well, wade in with me and see.

TARŌ KAJA: I'd like to, but the Master could summon me at any moment and I can't attend him with dirty feet. I'll call out from the bank.

BUAKU: Great idea. You call to the fish from the bank. I'm going in.

TARŌ KAJA: Go in! Go in!

BUAKU: Right. (*So saying, he leaps in, claps his hands, and chases the fish. Tarō Kaja removes his fan.*)

TARŌ KAJA (*his sword raised over his head*): Devil! You won't get away this time!

BUAKU: Cut it out. You'll frighten the fish.

TARŌ KAJA: It's no joke. I mean it.

BUAKU: What? You're serious?

TARŌ KAJA: Here's the master's sword, or have you forgotten what it looks like?

BUAKU: That's the Master's sword all right. Then you've really come to kill me?

TARŌ KAJA: Quit the whining. It'll just take one blow.

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BUAKU: As long as I'm alive, our paths will cross again.
TARŌ KAJA: Until then.
BUAKU: Until then.
TOGETHER: Until we meet again.

They part in tears. Buaku retreats to the rear of the stage and sits. Tarō Kaja straightens up.

TARŌ KAJA: This'll look bad for me. Buaku's gone and I let him escape. Oh no! I've let my emotions get the better of me, and now I wish I hadn't let him go. What am I going to do? I'll have to lie to the Master. (*He starts for home.*) Well, really! This just goes to show that no one should become a retainer. You please one side, and the other is mad. You please the other, and this one is mad. There's nothing worse than being caught in the middle like this. Oh no. I'm home already. (*He calls the Master.*)
MASTER: Did you manage to kill Buaku?
TARŌ KAJA: I did, sir.
MASTER: What's that? You killed him?
TARŌ KAJA: Yes, sir.
MASTER: Well, well! Splendid! Splendid! Here I'd been thinking lately how I wanted to kill him, but a man like Buaku . . . I was worried sick. It's a great relief to hear that you've pulled it off.
TARŌ KAJA: Yes, of course, sir. I'm sure it's a relief.
MASTER: After you left, I was pretty anxious.
TARŌ KAJA: Oh? About what, sir?
MASTER: Buaku's no ordinary fellow. Easy enough to say, "Kill him! Get him!" but another thing altogether to do it. If you had missed and gotten yourself killed instead, I'd have looked a fool in front of the neighbors. I thought maybe I should send someone with you. I was so worried.
TARŌ KAJA: Quite natural, sir.
MASTER: So, how did it go?
TARŌ KAJA: It went well, sir.
MASTER: Yes, and how did it end?
TARŌ KAJA: First off, I went to his place. When I told him I'd been ordered to kill him and that he should get himself ready, he said that he'd been expecting it. He turned to the west and recited the nenbutsu ten times.[243] Then I pulled out the Master's sword, and I chopped off his head.
MASTER: What? You chopped his head right off?
TARŌ KAJA: Yes, sir.
MASTER: Well, that went surprisingly well, didn't it?

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243. A prayer to Amida Buddha.

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The ghost of Buaku (Nomura Mansaku). (By permission of the photographer, Yoshikoshi Tatsuo)

MASTER: What? You saw my father?

BUAKU: Yup.

MASTER: Really? Well, well! My dear, dear father. . . . First off, whereabouts was this?

BUAKU: It wasn't in hell.

MASTER: Ahhh.

BUAKU: Neither was it in heaven.

MASTER: Yes?

BUAKU: He just wanders about.

MASTER: Yes, that seems about right. From the time he was born, he never did anything particularly good, nor did he do anything particularly bad. So, that seems about right, don't you think so?

TARŌ KAJA: It does, sir.

BUAKU: There's a message from the Old Master.

MASTER: Really? How kind of him. What is it?

BUAKU: It's thick with thieves where he is, and he doesn't have his sword. He said, "If you see him, get it and bring it to me."

MASTER: Hey! Tarō Kaja! I thought there were only thieves in this world, but he says the afterworld is full of them too.

TARŌ KAJA: That's what he says, sir.

MASTER: You can't relax much then, I guess.

TARŌ KAJA: Very true, sir.

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at the age of eighty-one, to become its abbot. Ironically, after having criticized Yōsō and his followers for paying more attention to the material prosperity of the temple than its spiritual mission, Ikkyū became responsible for collecting the funds to rebuild the temple. His charisma and contacts attracted donations from a large cross section of late Muromachi society. The rebuilding of the temple was a project that took much longer than Ikkyū's remaining life, but the people whom he had solicited while he was alive continued to support the project. More than forty years after Ikkyū's death, for example, the poet Sōchō even sold a precious copy of *The Tale of Genji* to rebuild the great gate of the temple.

CRAZY CLOUD ANTHOLOGY (*KYŌUNSHŪ*, 1480?)

The *Crazy Cloud Anthology*, named for Ikkyu's sobriquet "Crazy Cloud," is a collection of more than eight hundred of his Chinese poems (*kanshi*), compiled, it is assumed, by his disciples shortly before he died. One of the oldest manuscripts even has short colophons in Ikkyū's own hand. Writing poems in Chinese was the primary mode of literary expression for Zen monks of the Muromachi period, and the huge body of poetry and prose they produced is referred to as the literature of the Five Mountain Monasteries (*Gozan bungaku*). Although Ikkyū's poetry shares some similarities with that of his contemporaries, it is in other ways very different. For example, contemplative poems about nature occupy a large part of most Gozan poets' works, but there are few in Ikkyū's anthology. Instead, the majority of Ikkyū's poems are concerned intertextually with the teachings of former Zen masters and kōan, or Zen questions. Many of them seem to have served as lessons to stimulate discussion with other monks. Other poems express personal reflections, and a few offer glimpses into the social conditions and cultural ambience of the late Muromachi period. Two of Ikkyū's poems related to nō drama have been included here, since they refer to two nō plays translated in this volume.

Selected Poems

Dialectic of Non-Duality

Bo Juyi asked Master Bird Nest,[246] "What is the broad meaning of Buddhism?" Bird Nest answered, "Do no evil, do much good." Bo Juyi said, "But a child of three years could understand a teaching like that." Bird Nest replied, "A child of three years may be able to say it, but there are men of eighty years unable to practice it."

Old Master Ryōzen used to say: "If it were not for this one phrase of Bird Nest, our followers would all get bogged down in precepts like 'From the be-

246. Zen master Niao Ke (Bird Nest, 741–824), so named because he was fond of sleeping in trees.

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This one is bad, this one is good.
The monk's skill, Devil-Buddha desire.

Self Appraisal

Crazy madman stirring up a crazy style,
coming and going amid brothels and wineshops.
Which of you patch-cloth monks can trip me up?
I mark out the south, I mark out the north, the west, and east.

Pledge to Thank Mori for My Deep Debt to Her

The tree budded leaves that fell, but once more round comes spring;
green grows, flowers bloom, old promises are renewed.
Mori, if I ever forget my deep bond with you,[251]
hundreds and thousands of eons without measure,
may I be reborn as a beast.

The Second Year of Kanshō [1461]: Starvation

The extreme pain of hunger and cold pressing one body,
before the eyes—hungry ghosts, before the eyes—men.
Within the burning house of the Triple Sphere, a five-foot body:[252]
this is ten billion Mount Sumerus of suffering.

Lamenting Soldiers Dead in the War

Red-faced asuras, rank with the spirit of blood,[253]
screaming insults, in wild movement, demolish heaven and earth.
When they lose a battle, their skulls are split.
Immeasurable eons their ancient spirits shall roam.

Spreading Horse Dung to Cultivate the Mottled Bamboo

Have a look, I nourish the phoenix mind.
Swallows, sparrows, pigeons, and crows are just wild fowl.
Linji planted pine, Ikkyū plants bamboo;[254]
of the monastery's pleasant ambience, later people will sing.

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251. Mori, a blind entertainer, was Ikkyū's paramour in his later years (CZS, 363).

252. In Buddhist cosmology, the Triple Sphere is a term for this world, and Mount Sumeru is the mountain at the center of the universe.

253. In Buddhist cosmology, the asura are one of the six paths in the cycle of transmigration; they are titans with superhuman powers but always at war (CZS, 353).

254. Linji (J. Rinzai, d. 866), the founder of the Rinzai Zen school and therefore a major patriarch in Ikkyū's lineage.

Bahan dengan hak cipta

On Master Konparu's Nō Performance at Ichihara

Traces of the famous Konparu Zenchiku,
blowing the flute, singing on the stage, moonlight flowing bright,
before one's eyes, the charm of Komachi's mask,
Captain Fukakusa's dark spirit—his father's embodiment.[255]

On Matsukaze (Pining Wind) and Murasame (Autumn Rain)

How moving, man and woman singing in one body!
She only hopes for divine aid, her heart out on the waves.
In the crazed anguish of the autumn wind, love's grass lies exposed;
ten thousand leagues of misty waves, the depth of her tears' traces.[256]

[Introduction and translations by Sonja Arntzen]

LINKED VERSE (*RENGA*)

SŌGI

Sōgi (1421–1502), a poet in the late Muromachi period, was born into a family of the warrior class, probably in Ōmi Province just east of Kyoto. At a young age Sōgi was placed in one of the premier Zen temples of the day, where he evidently contemplated life as a cleric. Only fairly late, in his thirties, did he decide instead to make a living as a *rengashi*, a master of linked verse. Sōgi's first teacher was the renga master Sōzei (d. 1455), also of warrior background, although of much higher rank, who was important for not only guidance in poetry but also social contacts, enabling Sōgi to ask courtiers such as Ichijō Kanera (Kaneyoshi, 1421–1520) for instruction. With his teacher's encouragement, Sōgi studied linked verse as well as waka and court classics like *The Tale of Genji* and *The Tales of Ise*. Like Ton'a and other commoner poets, he never attained a dominant position in court circles, but by the end of his life he had achieved a position of respect seldom afforded one of such modest social origins.

During the Ōnin war (1467–1477), Sōgi spent much of his time traveling in the east country (Azuma) and the Kantō area and befriending powerful war-

255. This poem is about the performance by a son of Konparu Zenchiku. This is probably referring to the nō play *Stupa Komachi* (*Sotoba Komachi*), which is included in this anthology. In this play, the main actor takes the role of Komachi, who, at the climax of the play, is possessed by the spirit of her spurned lover, Captain Fukakusa.

256. This poem is about the nō play *Pining Wind* (*Matsukaze*), in which the ghost of the brine gatherer Matsukaze dons the robe left by her lover Yukihira at the height of her crazed dance of longing. The first line may refer to the fact that the male nō actor takes the female role or that Matsukaze, by putting on her lover's robe and court hat, fuses herself with her lover.

Bahan dengan hak cipta

lords, many of whom became his chief patrons. Staying sometimes for extended periods with one clan, he lectured, led linking sessions, and served as a mentor to samurai eager to acquire elite culture. As a partial record of this first great tour of the eastern regions, he composed a short travel journal, *Journey to Shirakawa* (*Shirakawa kikō*, 1468). The Shirakawa Pass, the entry into the northern frontier since ancient times, was a place that many famous poets of the past had visited, and he was anxious to add his name to the list of those who had recorded their impressions of the place in verse.

It was during his time in the east country that Sōgi met Shinkei (1406–1475), another refugee from the capital and a noted poet whose linked verse, characterized by the qualities of *yūgen* (mystery and depth) and *hiesabi* (chilled loneliness), he regarded as the finest of that of his contemporaries. In his own work, Sōgi tried in many ways to combine the strengths of his two teachers: Sōzei's verbal ingenuity and Shinkei's profundity. Although Shinkei was rather critical of Sōzei's work, he recognized Sōgi's talent and did all he could to encourage him.

After peace returned to Kyoto in the late 1470s, Sōgi set up his own practice there, in the tradition of poets like Ton'a and Shōtetsu. Sōzei, Shinkei, and their peers of the previous generation had died, and Sōgi marked their passing with an anthology of their work entitled *Notes from the Bamboo Grove* (*Chikurinshō*, 1476). By this time, he was indisputably the premier renga master in the capital and had students even among the traditional aristocracy. His unprecedented success was symbolized by two events: his appointment as steward of the Kitano Shrine's renga office in 1488, and a commission to compile a second imperially sanctioned anthology of linked verse, the *New Tsukuba Collection* (*Shinsen Tsukubashū*, 1495).

Even during the years when he was most in demand as a master in Kyoto, Sōgi spent a great deal of time on the road, visiting patrons for whom he acted as a teacher of linked verse and the classics of court literature and waka. One of his journeys, through Kyushu in 1480 and 1481, is recorded in detail in *Record of a Journey to Tsukushi* (*Tsukushi no michi no ki*). In his early years, traveling to attend patrons had been a necessity; later it became part of the rhythm of Sōgi's life and a crucial element of his literary practice.

Sōgi was a prolific writer. He left four major collections of his own linked verse, numerous full sequences that he had directed as senior participant (including *Three Poets at Minase* [*Minase sangin hyakuin*, 1488]) and that soon became required reading for aspiring poets, a personal collection of waka, more than a dozen essays on linked verse, and various lectures on court classics. He also was instrumental in reforming the *Kokin denju* (secret teachings of the *Kokinshū*) under the instruction he received from another warrior literatus named Tō no Tsuneyori (1401–1484?) during his first extended trip to the east country. In later years, these esoteric teachings assumed a central role in elite poetic culture, among both courtiers and warrior poets.

Telif hakkı olan materyal

Many of Sōgi's writings on linked verse are handbooks or compendia of notes intended for poets preparing to compose in a *za* (linked-verse session). As aesthetic theory, none of his work rises to the level of Shinkei's *Whisperings* (*Sasamegoto*, 1463). But in *East Country Dialogues* (*Azuma mondō*, 1467–1470), Sōgi addresses both practical questions concerning technique and the history of the genre and its aesthetic ideals; and in *An Old Man's Diversions* (*Oi no susami*, late 1470s), he offers sensitive readings of links by his teachers that reveal him as both a scholar and an astute critic. The number of disciples he attracted is an indication that he was a dedicated and respected teacher.

Sōgi left Kyoto in the summer of 1500 to visit friends in the east country, and he died at Hakone (in present-day Kanagawa Prefecture) in 1502. His last days are recorded in a short essay, "A Record of Sōgi's Passing" (Sōgi shūen ki, 1502), written by a disciple, Sōchō (1448–1532), a distinguished renga poet.

EAST COUNTRY DIALOGUES
(*AZUMA MONDŌ*, 1467–1470)

As a master of linked verse, Sōgi was first of all a teacher of many disciples, some of them training to become professionals, others content to be amateurs. Most of his essays were written for such students, usually for specific individuals. The most famous of Sōgi's treatises is best known by the title *East Country Dialogues* and was written in response to questions by members of the Nagao clan of Musashi Province (in present-day Tokyo and Saitama Prefecture). The mondō (question–answer) format was a well-established didactic genre, and we cannot be sure whether the questions in the text were recorded verbatim, but the answers serve the purpose of introducing the basics of renga. The title *East Country Dialogues*—probably not chosen by Sōgi but by a later scribe—suggests that the text was regarded as a successor to Nijō Yoshimoto's *Tsukuba Dialogue* (*Tsukuba mondō*, 1372), which was widely accepted as the first and foremost critical text in the renga tradition.

Most of Sōgi's critical writings are handbooks on technique, but *Azuma mondō* touches also on questions of history, philosophy, and aesthetics. The following are three sections from the text, two dealing with matters of training and the third with the proper pace of composition in the *za*, in the linked-verse session.

QUESTION: What writings should be read as part of the renga poet's training [*keiko*]?

ANSWER: This is a difficult question. My own opinion is that all the imperial anthologies of the various reigns, beginning with the *Man'yōshū*, as well as the personal collections of the several families of poetry, are suitable for training. Still, it depends on the individual. Since the world counts on me

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for expertise,[257] I have collected texts of the *Man'yōshū*, *The Eight Anthologies*,[258] *The Tale of Genji*, *The Tales of Ise*, *The Tales of Yamato*, *The Tale of Sagoromo*, *Utsuho* [*The Tale of the Hollow Tree*], *The Tale of the Bamboo Cutter*,[259] and the like, which I refer to in case questions arise—although, having said that, the unfortunate fact is that I can't claim that my efforts have been of much benefit to others or myself.

Perhaps those preoccupied with government duties, or busy with administrative service, cannot hope to engage in such broad training. I do believe, however, that all students should at the very least peruse *The Three Collections*,[260] *Senzaishū*, *Shinkokinshū*, and catalogs of poems about famous places.[261] Of course, even that may be too much for the elderly and for children. In such cases, they should just use the *Kokinshū*, *Shinkokinshū*, and books on famous places.

QUESTION: One hears of beginning, intermediate, and advanced stages of training. What do these stages entail?

ANSWER: I haven't ever seen anything written down about beginning, intermediate, and advanced stages of training.[262] But a young person will begin by perusing the *Kokinshū* innocently,[263] committing to memory poems that will be useful later on, and play chain games[264] with friends, always chanting poems. I would call this the beginning stage.

In the intermediate stage, students ask people about the meanings of classical waka and when the words thus learned come up in linking sessions, will take care to use them in making links. By doing so, one will acquire the respect of others and be pleased with oneself, until one gradually develops

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257. *Utsuwa* (vessel) is a term originally used in Confucian discourse to refer to an expert in one field, rather than a proper "gentleman," who by definition is above specializing. Here Sōgi uses the term self-effacingly to refer to his role as a master of linked verse expected to have specialized knowledge.

258. The first eight imperial waka anthologies, from the *Kokinshū* to the *Shinkokinshū*.

259. All these texts are from the "golden age" of courtly culture, ending around the middle of the thirteenth century, and most are represented in this anthology. This list shows a general bias among poets of the late medieval age against the work of more recent times. In fact, the rules of linked verse explicitly advised against alluding to texts later than the *Shokugosenshū* (1251).

260. The first three imperial waka anthologies: *Kokinshū*, *Gosenshū*, and *Shūishū*.

261. "Famous places" (*nadokoro*) mentioned in literary texts. Many medieval treatises and handbooks contained lists of such literary topoi.

262. In fact, references to such "stages" in training are fairly common in the writings of earlier renga masters, but Sōgi's treatment here is more comprehensive than earlier statements.

263. "With no special intentions or preconceptions." Young poets, in particular, were encouraged to do practice without preconceived notions. As the next phrases suggest, repetition, under a master's direction, was deemed the most important form of preparation.

264. A game in which one person would quote an ancient poem, with the next person being required to quote another poem beginning with the last syllable of the first poem.

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the heart of a connoisseur.[265] This is what should be called the intermediate stage.

Once beyond that level, you need no longer think about borrowing words from particular waka but, instead, putting all your efforts into the work of attaining moments of intense feeling [*ushin*], seek beauty of form and grandeur of style.[266] In this way, you will stay effortlessly within the realm of waka, without drawing on the diction of specific poems. Once you have entered this deeply into the art, all the texts will be in your heart. You will no longer need to tire your eyes with reading. I would call this the advanced stage of training.

QUESTION: Which would you say is better—favoring a rapid pace in the *za* or a slow pace?

ANSWER: The Way of linked verse is to ponder deeply and, indeed, to brood over your links. Nevertheless there are times when, judging the needs of a whole sequence, you may produce a simple verse that surpasses a distinctive verse in total effect. In the distant past it appears that most people felt they must ponder carefully in the *za*. Lord Sōzei,[267] however, said that you should polish your talents through practice [*keiko*][268] and then compose quickly when in the *za*.

Surely, without practice, you will not produce an outstanding link in the *za*, no matter how you agonize over it. It is particularly unfortunate when someone, at a promising point in a sequence, as if to keep anyone else from coming up with a link, produces a verse with an earnest look on his face even before the scribe has had time to read the previous verse aloud. You should understand that when pursuing this Way, you must weigh your own attainments against the circumstances of the *za* and compose appropriately, without being either overly modest or too forward.

Anyone wishing to pursue this Way should first seek the aid of the gods and buddhas. Dedicate oneself to Sumiyoshi and Tamatsushima,[269] embrace the straight and forsake the crooked, abandon distinctions between self and other, and, whether as a teacher of others or as a disciple, pray only to become skillful in the end.

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265. *Suki*, a true devotee and not just a casual participant.

266. *Sugata utsukushiku taketakaki tei*. The vocabulary here is that of the courtly waka tradition, showing that for Sōgi, as for his teachers Sōzei and Shinkei, linked verse was a genre whose aesthetic goals were identical with those of waka.

267. A warrior-poet (d. 1455) who served as commissioner of the shogunal renga office. He was Sōgi's first teacher.

268. In the medieval period, constant practice was considered essential to success not only in linked verse but also in waka and other such practices. Only with the accumulation of experience in actual practice could a poet hope to become proficient in the Way.

269. The shrines whose deities were worshiped as patron gods by poets.

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typically expressed as a withered landscape. Sōgi later paid Shinkei the honor of including more of his poems in *Shinsen Tsukubashū* (1495) than those of any other commoner poet.

Sōzei and Senjun were Sōgi's first teachers. Although Shinkei dismissed Sōzei as a military man (he was a retainer of the powerful Yamana clan) lacking refinement, Sōzei produced many links of subtlety and grace, in addition to those relying more on verbal associations and wit. Senjun, too, was praised for his rhetorical dexterity and verses of intense feeling.

Chiun, also known by his lay name Ninagawa Chikamasa, was another of Shōtetsu's students. From a military family, Chiun served in the councils of the shogun Ashikaga Yoshinori (r. 1429–1441). His poetry reflects his study of Chinese poetry and painting.

For sixty years now I have been tossed on the waves of life, and I am still unable to submit readily to what I hear.[272] Instead, I while away my time watching blossoms in spring and the moon in autumn, waiting for frost at morning and the wind at evening. Yet even if the time when I fade like the dew on the leaves is still in the distance, it can't be far off. So I sometimes have berated myself, wondering why I put all my efforts into the pursuits of the present world, with no thought of preparing for the world to come.

Yet still I came back to thoughts of this world, fair as the river Yoshino, and determined to gather materials and make a booklet exemplifying poems of the past and present. Because this is no more than an amusement of my declining years, I decided to call it *An Old Man's Diversions*.

. . .

tsumi no mukui wa	Let the price of my offense
sa mo araba are	be whatever it must be!
tsuki nokoru	Still there is the moon
kariba no yuki no	over the snowy hunting grounds
asaborake	in the faint light of dawn.

Gusai

Someone is getting up in the morning after spending the night in the mountains. In the interest of the moment, one might indeed forget [the sin of hunting].[273] Here the poet has assumed the identity of the hunter in making the link.

272. *The Analects* quote Confucius as saying that "at the age of sixty, I heard [the biddings of Heaven] with a docile ear"—in other words, without ambivalence (Arthur Waley, trans., *The Analects of Confucius* [London: Unwin Hyman, 1988], 88).

273. Buddhist doctrine held that the taking of life is a sin, and so according to the law of karma, a hunter is bound to be punished in another incarnation.

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Linking "the moon of Uji's mountains" to "dawn" would be the conventional thing. Some people may wonder about linking "wild geese" and "Uji." In *The Tale of Genji* there is a poem that reads, "the wild geese seem to tell us that nothing in this world can last. . . ."[275] This is not to say, however, that "wild geese" is linked to "Uji" here. I am simply responding to what people may think. Since the maeku [preceding verse] is a Ground verse[276] yet resonant with overtones [*yojō aru*], the link to it is crucial. Hence the author relies on common associations, while basing the link on the configuration of the verses.[277] This is why "wild geese" came to mind for the link. The matter of linking to Ground verses is of great importance in renga.

. . .

waga kokoro	With whom can I share
tare ni kataran	the feelings wrought in my heart
aki no sora	by the autumn sky?
ogi ni yūkaze	In the reeds, the evening wind;
kumo ni karigane	in the clouds, wild geese calling.

Shinkei

Here the poet has made a link to "With whom can I share" by showing that the feeling is something "beyond what words can say" [*gongo dōdan*]. The conception of the tsukeku is outstanding and the link also is beyond compare. Too many verses of this sort can become tiresome, though. The poet should take special care in composing them.

. . .

nozato no aki no	In a distant village,
kure zo sabishiki	how lonely is autumn dusk!

275. The full poem, written by Kaoru after the death of the Eighth Prince, in the "Beneath the Oak" (Shiigamoto) chapter of *The Tale of Genji*, reads: "In autumn mist that clouds the skies above without a break, wild geese pass by, declaring 'Nothing in this world can last.'"

276. The phrase is *mumon no ku* (a verse without design or rhetorical inflections) or *ji no ku* (sometimes translated as "background verse"). It refers to relatively plain verses and links that make up the background for more conspicuous "pattern" verses (*mon no ku*).

277. Sōgi is suggesting that because the maeku is plain and yet resonant, it calls for something more subtle than a link based on *yoriai*, the conventionalized verbal associations that were cataloged' in popular renga manuals and lexicons. The link between "wild geese" and "the moon of Uji's mountains" is not a yoriai, but the association can be validated by the poem from *The Tale of Genji* cited by Sōgi. The weight of the link, however, is on its overall configuration.

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maneku to mo	Wave though they may,
susuki ga moto wa	who will come visit them?
tare ka kon	Plumes of pampas grass.

Sōzei

The ordinary person will not think it difficult to link to the maeku here. An adept will recognize the challenge. This is because the unskilled poet sees no trouble with any link whatsoever and thinks that it will be a simple task. The adept sees the difficulty. For example, facing a target of five feet and two inches in diameter, the unskilled archer will think it impossible to miss a target this large. Just by thinking so when he releases the arrow, he will miss the target. The skilled archer always aims the arrow at one point.[278] In the same way, this verse should not be handled by the unskilled. The loneliness of a country village is captured well by the phrase "Wave though they may, who will come visit them?" The added verse is also novel as a single verse. The link shows the importance of grasping the sense of the preceding verse.

. . .

aware ni mo	A pitiful sight—
mashiba oritaku	that smoke rising at evening
yūkeburi	from a brushwood fire.
sumi uru ichi no	His charcoal sold at market,
kaerusa no michi	a man returns to the hills.

Shinkei

Morning to evening, a man works hard making charcoal to sell in the market, but in his own hut, the smoke rises only from brushwood he has gathered, a most pitiful statement.[279] This poet has a special affinity for such themes.

. . .

sode sae nururu	Even my sleeves are dampened
michishiba no tsuyu	by dew on the grassy roadside.
inishie no	At Uchino Fields
miya no Uchino no	I look out on the old site
hara o mite	of the palace grounds.

Sōzei

278. The skilled archer always aims for the exact center of the target, regardless of its size. The analogy is that the maeku here is capacious enough to invite any number of possible links, and the novice does not see that as the challenge it is. A five-foot, two-inch target was the largest of the regulated sizes for use in archery practice.

279. The man is too poor to use the product of his own labor.

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To associate Uchino with grasses is customary. Uchino is the former site of the ancient imperial palace compound. Of that once grand palace no trace remains now, and the feeling that one has seeing thick grasses growing by the roadside there is indeed enough to dampen the sleeves. Whenever I cross through those fields, I am moved again by Sōzei's verse, and recalling it now, I thought to add it here.[280]

. . .

kaze mo me ni minu	The wind can no more be seen
yama no amabiko	than an echo in the mountains.
monogoto ni	In everything,
tada ari nashi o	we judge what is, what is not,
katachi nite	only by outer form.

Shinkei

Both the wind and echoes exist but have no form, and so they exemplify the principle of simultaneous being and nonbeing. The phrase "In every thing" leads to an insight into the emptiness and provisional existence of all phenomena. The verse preceding the maeku here must have included the word "to call out" or "to answer"[281] in his link. To make a link such as this in response to such a difficulty is beyond most mortals.

THREE POETS AT MINASE (*MINASE SANGIN HYAKUIN*, 1488)

In the spring of 1488, three renga masters—Sōgi (1421–1502) and his disciples Sōchō (1448–1532) and Shōhaku (1443–1527)—met at Minase, in Settsu Province (present-day Osaka) to compose a hundred-verse renga sequence. When completed, the sequence was presented to the nearby Minase Shrine as a votive offering in memory of Emperor GoToba (1180–1239), who had built a noted detached imperial villa in that area centuries earlier. As the emperor whose court had produced the *Shinkokinshū* and count-

280. Uchino was a large compound in northern Kyoto that was the site of the imperial palace until the early thirteenth century. Thereafter, the emperor lived in various "town palaces," and the compound became a huge vacant lot.

281. In other words, in the original sequence of verses from which these two are drawn, the verse preceding the maeku cited here ("The wind can no more be seen than an echo . . . ") most likely contained either the verb "to call out" or "to answer," and the word "echo" is linked to that by conventional verbal association (yoriai). Since the rules prohibited "crossing back" (*uchikoshi*), or continuing the same meaning over three successive verses, Shinkei's tsukeku was forced to make a link without any reference to conventional verbal associations with "echo." He accomplishes this with a strong break from the concrete to the conceptual, turning the words "wind" and "echo" into emblems of the Buddhist doctrine of the ultimate emptiness of all phenomena.

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6

shimo oku nohara
aki wa kurekeri

Out on frost-laden fields
autumn has come to its end.[287]

Sōchō

. . .

37

kimi o okite
akazu mo tare o
omouran

While I have you,
why tire of you and think
of anyone else?[288]

Sōchō

38

sono omokage ni
nitaru dani nashi

No resemblance do I see
to that other countenance.[289]

Shōhaku

39

kusaki sae
furuki miyako no
urami nite

Shrubs and grasses—
even these make me long bitterly
for the old capital.[290]

Sōgi

40

mi no uki yado mo
nagori koso are

Even here in my house of pain
I still have some attachments.[291]

Sōchō

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287. Old Commentary: "The moon always 'remains' of course, but here the author has linked a lingering moon to late autumn. The moon remains in the night engulfed by mist as autumn comes to its end on frosty fields. 'Mist' and 'frost' complement each other."

288. Old Commentary: "I already have you to love, why should I long for anyone else?" The verse could be taken as a literal question, but in the context is more likely meant rhetorically.

289. Old Commentary: "How unlikely that there could be anyone better than you." Inevitably, the mind seeks a comparison. The conclusion here is that the one he or she loves is beyond compare.

290. Old Commentary: "The courtyard garden has grown old, no image of what I once saw there." The word "even" in the maeku is taken here to mean "too," not "let alone. . . ." The previous verse by itself is a love verse, but in the link "that visage" becomes the appearance of a ruined capital, overgrown with shrubs and grasses.

291. Old Commentary: "Still recalling the garden of my old dwelling, which I can't bring myself to abandon, I resent even those shrubs and grasses." A lament by someone who has not been able to sever attachments to the world.

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akikaze no	Living in pines
matsu ni sumu tsuru	blown by an autumn wind—a crane
koe fukete	voice clear, late at night.[300]

Shōhaku

926–927

hitori nomi	All by myself
okiiru toko ni	I sit up in bed
tsuki o mite	and gaze at the moon.

yoso no kinuta ni	A distant fulling block
samuki koromode	sends a chill through my sleeves.[301]

Chiun

Winter

1224–1225

omou hodo o ba	How could another know
tare ka shiramashi	my inmost thoughts?

sabishisa wa	Loneliness disappears—
ato naki yama no	amid the snow on the mountains
kesa no yuki	untrodden this morning.[302]

Senjun

Love

1427–1428

uchitsuke ni to ya	"Isn't this rather sudden?"
ware o hedatsuru	she draws away.

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300. Takasago is a place in Harima (present-day Hyōgo Prefecture) that was famous for its pines. Rather than provide a reinterpretation of the maeku, Shōhaku fills out the scene. The clear (*sumu* here is a double entendre, meaning both "to live" and "clear") call of the crane is the stimulus for the shift in view from the sands below to the wind in the pines above.

301. The sound of a mallet on a fulling block, suggesting robes being beaten clean in preparation for cold weather, makes the speaker feel all the more keenly the cold through his own thin sleeves. In *An Old Man's Diversions* (*Oi no susami*), Sōgi praises this link for its straightforwardness, recommending it as a lesson to beginners: "These days, those who have just a little experience in the Way develop an affection for the unusual and don't understand the importance of straightforward sentiment and elegant words [*kokoro naoku kotoba en naru tokoro*]. In this they are inferior even to rank beginners." The sound of fulling blocks is associated with autumn.

302. So beautiful is the unblemished snow that the speaker forgets his loneliness.

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Autumn

3803

kiku hodo wa	Listening to it,
tsuki o wasururu	you forget the moon—
shigure kana	passing showers.[314]

Shinkei

[Introductions and translations by Steven Carter]

MUROMACHI TALES (*OTOGI-ZŌSHI*)

Muromachi tales (*otogi-zōshi*, sometimes translated as "companion books") constitute an extremely diverse genre of short to middle-length narratives dating from the early fourteenth to the early seventeenth century (Northern and Southern Courts, Muromachi, and early Tokugawa periods).[315] Alternatively referred to as *Muromachi monogatari* (Muromachi tales) and *chūsei shōsetsu* (medieval novels), otogi-zōshi differ from their Heian and neoclassical antecedents in their thematic variety, their abundant and often vibrant illustrations, their plot-centered narratives, and their broad popular appeal. Since the early twentieth century, bibliographers have identified approximately four hundred separate otogi-zōshi, most of which survive in numerous manuscripts in multiple textual lines. *The Tale of Bunshō* (*Bunshō sōshi*), for example, is preserved in at least eighty-two manuscripts in ten textual lines, and *Little One-Inch* (*Issun bōshi*) survives in a mere three manuscripts in a single textual line.[316] Of largely unknown authorship, otogi-zōshi incorporate a seemingly endless range of characters, from buddhas, nobles, warriors, and commoners to monsters, fish, and sentient plants, all set in a variety of domestic, foreign, and imagined locales.

The Northern and Southern Courts period (1336–1392), when court traditions dramatically declined and those of commoners came to the fore, marks the great divide between the early medieval and the late medieval age. Even though Heian literary genres—imperial anthologies, diaries of court women,

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314. "The moon" and "sudden rain showers" are two of the most distinctive autumn images. When they appear together, the speaker often laments that the rain obscures the moon, but here Shinkei presents a speaker so entranced by the sound of the rain that he forgets the moon—at least for a time. "The true feel of passing showers," Kensai says in *Chikubun*, "an interesting link."

315. The term *otogi-zōshi* derives from the name of a boxed-set anthology of short medieval fiction (*Otogi bunko* [*The Companion Library*, ca. 1716–1729]) published by the Osaka bookseller Shibukawa Seiemon. In its strictest sense, it refers only to the twenty-three works in Shibukawa's collection. Since at least the early nineteenth century, however, the term has also been used to refer to the larger corpus of medieval tales from which the *Otogi bunko* texts were drawn.

316. Matsumoto's 1982 catalog of extant otogi-zōshi, 122–124.

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and neoclassical monogatari—survived and even flourished during the Kamakura period, they began to disappear around the fourteenth century.

The editing and collecting of setsuwa, one of the principal cultural phenomena of the late Heian and Kamakura periods, declined precipitously at this time as well. But the earlier literary forms were reborn as otogi-zōshi, many of which—particularly the commoner tales—embraced elements of both setsuwa, with their focus on commoner life, and Heian monogatari, with their emphases on waka (classical poetry) and the glories of imperial court culture. Indeed, the otogi-zōshi absorbed a wide range of earlier narrative forms, including stories about the origins of shrines and temples (engi-mono) and warrior tales (gunki-mono). Viewed historically, otogi-zōshi thus bridge the gap between the Heian aristocratic and Tokugawa popular literary forms, the latter represented by the *kana-zōshi* and *ukiyo-zōshi* (tales of the floating world) that emerged in the seventeenth century.

As noted earlier, one of the main differences between early medieval culture and late medieval culture was the new audience, epitomized in the term *gekokujō* (overthrowing of the upper by the lower). This term applies most appropriately to the period from the Kenmu restoration (1333–1334), when Emperor GoDaigo tried to restore direct imperial rule, through the Warring States period (1467–1573). Gekokujō could be found on a number of levels: social, political, economic, and military. In the provinces, for example, the *shugo daimyō* (military governors) became daimyō (semiautonomous warlords ruling over one or more provinces), and it was people like them who may have sponsored the production of the many lavishly illustrated otogi-zōshi martial tales that survive today, including the numerous exquisite *Demon Shuten Dōji* and *Little Atsumori* picture scrolls. Like the protagonists often found in kyōgen, some of the characters in otogi-zōshi reflect this spirit of gekokujō, in which individuals of lower status rise above or otherwise get the better of their superiors.

In the Heian and Kamakura periods, the aristocrats and the clergy, many of whom were of aristocratic origin, produced the texts. But as a result of various wars, particularly during the Northern and Southern Courts period, the nobility lost its power, the capital was damaged, and many cultural treasures were lost. With the decline of the capital and its surrounding culture, new authors and audiences appeared, and otogi-zōshi were subsequently produced by what seems to have been a wide range of social groups: fallen nobility, Buddhist priests, renga masters, literate samurai, recluses, and well-to-do urban commoners. The new, largely commoner audiences for whom they wrote had diverse interests and ambitions. Some, having suddenly risen in social status or attained material wealth, were especially interested in culture—classical aristocratic culture—but lacked the means to acquire a classical education. Otogi-zōshi, particularly the tales of the nobility, likely functioned for them as popular digests of the classics, providing a means of enjoying formerly aristocratic mores without the necessity of requiring a formal education.

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The otogi-zōshi encompass an astonishing range of subject matter. One type derives from Heian monogatari, particularly *The Tale of Genji*, and includes such evil stepmother tales as *Head Bowl* (*Hachikazuki*).[317] This category also covers tales about poetry and famous waka poets. Another prominent category is priest tales, which include tales of awakening (*hosshin*) and confession, such as *The Three Priests* (*Sannin hōshi*), and stories about relationships between an older Buddhist priest and a young boy acolyte (*chigo*), in which love is often presented as a means to help the priest achieve enlightenment. The most famous of these is *A Long Tale for an Autumn Night* (*Aki no yo no naga monogatari*), in which a priest from Mount Hiei and a chigo from Mii-dera temple are caught in a tragic struggle between the two temples.[318] Another subgenre is the "breaking of vows" stories (*hakaidan*), in which a priest violates monastic rules, as in *Errand Nun* (*Oyō no ama*).[319]

Otogi-zōshi also encompass a number of tales about samurai, which can be considered offshoots of the earlier warrior tales (gunki-mono). Here the most popular figure by far is Yoshitsune. The otogi-zōshi warrior tales recount legends about struggles with monsters and villains such as *The Demon Shuten Dōji* (*Shuten Dōji*), which is translated here, as well as many tales of commoners, which often involve courtship and social climbing. The most notable of these are *The Tale of Bunshō* (*Bunshō sōshi*); *Lazy Tarō* (*Monogusa Tarō*), which is included here; and *Little One-Inch* (*Issun bōshi*). Otogi-zōshi also may be about nonhumans or animals (*irui mono*), like *Urashima tarō, The Clam's Tale* (*Hamaguri no sōshi*), and *The Tale of Mice* (*Nezumi no sōshi*).

A recurrent characteristic of otogi-zōshi is their didacticism, often in the form of heavy-handed lessons revealing how readers' spiritual and material ambitions might best be attained. Except for all-too-typical cases in which characters find themselves torn between duty to their families and aspirations to the Buddhist Way, as in *Chūjōhime* (*Chūjōhime no honji*), internal moral conflicts are rare. Characters are usually depicted as either inherently good or bad, in some cases alternating between the two. The apparently overriding purpose of many otogi-zōshi is to encourage the cultivation of specific virtues or devotional practices by depicting exemplary lives and promising grandiose rewards; but the purpose of others is to simply entertain. Some audiences may have believed that by merely reading or listening to these texts, they could achieve the things described in them. Thus *Lazy Tarō* concludes with the line "The god has vowed that those who daily read this story or tell it to others will be filled with riches

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317. Translated by Chigusa Steven in "*Hachikazuki:* A Muromachi Short Story," *Monumenta Nipponica* 32 (1977): 303–331.

318. Margaret H. Childs, *Rethinking Sorrow: Revelatory Tales of Late Medieval Japan* (Ann Arbor: Center for Japanese Studies, University of Michigan, 1991).

319. Virginia Skord, trans., *Tales of Tears and Laughter: Short Fiction of Medieval Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1991), 205–220.

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and achieve their hearts' desires. How wonderfully blessed!" *The Story of Bunshō* was similarly read by young women at New Year's in the hope that they, too, would receive auspicious returns.

LAZY TARŌ (*MONOGUSA TARŌ*)

Like a number of the commoner tales in otogi-zoshi, such as *The Tale of Bunshō* (*Bunshō sōshi*) and *Little One-Inch* (*Issun bōshi*), *Lazy Tarō* is a story of upward social mobility and ends on a celebratory note. And like these other two otogi-zōshi, it also is a tale of courtship. In a manner typical of the gekokujō (overcoming the higher by the lower) spirit of the late medieval period, there are a number of inversions: from outsider to insider, from low to high, and from profane to sacred. The protagonist, who looks repulsive and is from the lowest order, turns out to be very good at poetry, a sign of high culture and a key to his successful courtship. Much of the humor and interest of the narrative derives from these various paradoxes.

Lazy Tarō represents a popular form of the "exile of the young noble" found in earlier narratives such as the *Kojiki* and *The Tale of Genji*. The important difference here is that in contrast to the earlier exiles, in which the hero is already of high status, the protagonist begins in a low social position and ends with wealth and high social status. Significantly, Lazy Tarō attains success as a result of his own efforts, but his spectacular success is reinforced by the revelation that he is a god. Often the protagonist has a patron god, as Little One-Inch (Sumiyoshi) and Bunshō the Saltmaker (Kashima) do, but here they are united in the body of Tarō, who turns out to be a god of longevity. In this sense, Lazy Tarō may be seen as a variation on the *honji-mono* (tale of a god's origins), in which a male protagonist typically encounters great difficulties, is exiled from his parents and familiar surroundings, reveals his strength, and is recognized as a deity who provides benefit to the people. Lazy Tarō brings considerable humor to this plot paradigm, suggesting that it may even be a parody of that convention.

At the furthest reaches of the Tōsen route, in a place called Atarashi village, in Tsukama, one of the ten districts of Shinano Province, lived a peculiar man called Lazy Tarō Hijikasu,[320] so dubbed because no one in the province could equal him in sheer laziness. He may have been called lazy, but he had a wonderful idea for building a house. He would construct a clay enclosure with a gate in three of the four sides. Inside, to the north, south, east, and west, he would create ponds and islands planted with pines and cedars. Arched bridges, their pillars crowned in shining ornamentation, would link the islands to the

320. The name Hijikasu may be a combination of *hiji* (dirt) and *kasu* (dregs). Now a common personal name, Tarō was once associated with the first and best among many, hence in the present context, the filthiest or dirtiest.

เนื้อหาคุ้มครองลิขสิทธิ์

garden. It was truly a marvelous plan! There would be a retainers' quarters twelve *ken* wide, connecting corridors nine *ken*[321] long, a water-viewing pavilion, galleries, and plum, paulownia, and bamboo courtyards abloom with myriad varieties of flowers. There would be a main chamber of twelve *ken*, roofed in cypress bark, with damask-covered ceilings, gold- and silver-studded beam ends and rafters, and splendid woven hanging blinds. Everything would be magnificent, right down to the stables and servants' quarters. If only he could build such a fine mansion! But he utterly lacked the means, and so he was obliged to make do with a straw mat upheld by four bamboo poles—a most uncomfortable residence in either rain or shine. As if the lean-to wasn't wretched enough, Tarō had more than his due share of chilblains, fleas, lice, and even elbow grime. He had no assets, so he couldn't set up shop; he tilled no land, so he had no food. For days on end he would lie there without rising once.

On one occasion, a kind soul said to him, "Here, take this, you must be hungry," and gave him five rice cakes left over from a wedding feast. Tarō received food so rarely that he immediately devoured four of them. As for the last, however, if he kept it and didn't eat it, he could rely on it later; if he ate it now and left nothing, his stomach might be full, but then he could not expect more later. Just looking at that rice cake provided a certain solace, so he decided to keep it until he received something else. Lazy Tarō would lie there playing with it, rolling it around on his chest, polishing it with oil blotted from his nose, wetting it with spit, and balancing it on his head. While he was thus amusing himself, the rice cake slipped from his grasp and rolled over to the side of the road. Tarō looked at it and pondered. He was too lazy to get up and retrieve it. Figuring that sooner or later someone was bound to come by, he waited for three days, waving around a bamboo stick to ward off the dogs and crows who came to nibble at it, but not one person came along.

Finally, on the third day, there came the awaited passerby, none other than the local Land Steward, Saemon no jō Nobuyori,[322] off on an autumn hunting expedition accompanied by a host of some fifty to sixty mounted retainers carrying white-eyed falcons. When Tarō spotted him, he craned his neck and called, "Hey you! Excuse me, but there's a rice cake over there. Would you mind fetching it for me?"

But Nobuyori paid no heed and continued on his way.

"How in the world can such a lazy man possibly manage an entire domain?" thought Tarō. "It isn't that much trouble to get down and pick up a rice cake. I thought I was the only lazy fellow around, but there must be many of us."

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321. The *ken* was a linear measure about six feet in length.

322. "Saemon no jō" refers to his formal court post, sixth rank or below, which was granted to men of his position.

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"What a heartless lord!" he grumbled aloud, quite provoked.

Had Nobuyori been a short-tempered man, he would have taken offense, and there is no telling what he might have done. But instead he reined in his horse and asked his retainer, "Is that fellow the notorious Lazy Tarō?"

"There couldn't possibly be two of them, sir. That must be him."

"You there, how do you make a living?" asked Nobuyori directly.

"When people give me something, I'll eat anything at all. When they don't, I go without for four, five, as many as ten days."

"What a sorry plight! You must do something to help yourself! There is a saying that those who rest under the shade of the same tree and who drink of the same water share a karmic connection from a former life. That of all places in the world you were born into my domain must mean there is a bond between us. Cultivate some land and live off that."

"But I have no land."

"Then I'll give you some."

"I'm too lazy—I don't want to work."

"Then set up a shop."

"I have nothing to sell."

"Then I'll give you something."

"It's hard to do something you're not used to, and I've never done it before."

"What an odd fellow!" thought Nobuyori. "I must do something to help him out." Pulling out an inkstone, he wrote the following edict and had it distributed throughout his lands:

"Lazy Tarō is to be fed daily: three measures of rice twice a day and wine once a day. Those who fail to comply will be expelled from this domain." Everyone thought this a prime example of the saying, "The unreasonableness of a lord's decree," but for three years they fed Tarō as ordered.

At the end of spring of the third year, Arisue, Governor of Shinano and Major Counselor of Nijō, ordered the village of Atarashi to supply a laborer to work in the capital. All the villagers gathered together to decide which household should provide the laborer. It had been such a long time since this sort of demand had been imposed that they were at a loss about what to do.

Then someone suggested, "How about sending Lazy Tarō?"

Another objected, "That's ridiculous! He's so lazy he wouldn't even pick up a rice cake lying in the road—he waited for the Steward to pass by and asked him to get it!"

"Convincing someone like Tarō to do it just might be the answer. Come on, let's give it a try," said another. So four or five elders got together and went to Tarō's hovel.

"Hey there, Lord Lazy Bones! Please help us out! It's our turn to send a man for public labor."

"What's that?" asked Tarō.

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She was taken aback. Well, he might understand that, but he certainly wouldn't be able to guess another. "It's in a village where the sun sets."

"Ah, a village where the sun sets. I can guess that one, too. It must be deep in Dark Mountain.[329] Whereabouts?"

"That indeed is my home. You must look for Lampwick Lane."

"Tallow Lane?[330] Whereabouts?"

"That indeed is my home. It is a shy village."

"Hidden Village?[331] Whereabouts?"

"That indeed is my home. It is a village of cloaks."

"Brocade Lane?[332] Whereabouts?"

"That indeed is my home. It is in a land of solace."

"Love-Tryst Province?[333] Whereabouts?"

"At an unclouded village of cosmetics." . . .

As long as he was responding like this, there was no way for the lady to escape. Perhaps she could recite some poetry and flee while he was working it out. Taking her cue from his bamboo stick, she recited:

> Rather hard to join with the man I see
> carrying a staff of many-jointed bamboo.[334]

"Oh, dear!" thought Tarō. "The lady's saying that she doesn't want to sleep with me." And he replied:

> Each and every stalk is nightly linked together.
> Why, then, can there be no joining with this bamboo bough?[335]

"Oh, no!" thought the lady. "This man is saying that he wants to sleep with me! But his poetic sensitivity does make him much more refined than he looks." And she said:

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329. A village where the sun sets would be dark, so it must lie in the depths of Dark Mountain (Kurama no oku).

330. Because lamps are lit with tallow, Lampwick Lane (Tomoshibi no kōji) indicates Tallow Lane (Abura no kōji).

331. A shy village (*hazukashi no sato*) would be hidden from sight, hence Hidden Village (Shinobu no sato).

332. Robes are made of fabric, so a village of cloaks (*uwagi no sato*) indicates Brocade Lane (Nishiki no kōji).

333. Meeting a love brings solace, so a land of solace (*nagusamu kuni*) would be in Love-Tryst Province (Afumi no kuni, a pun on Ōmi Province).

334. The verse puns on *fushi* (lie down) and *fushi* (bamboo joint).

335. The verse incorporates the puns of the preceding poem, extending it with puns on *yo*: "world," "stalk," and "night."

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spread out a mat trimmed with elaborately patterned edging, the likes of which Tarō had never seen, and bade him sit on it.

Lazy Tarō was quite exhausted from all the running around he had done that day. He hoped that they would bring him something—anything—soon. What might it be? If it were chestnuts, he would first roast, then eat them; if persimmons, pears, or rice cakes, he would gobble them down right away. If they gave him wine, he would drink almost twenty cups of it. As he was sitting there musing expectantly, the maid brought out a knife, salt, and a rough-edged basket filled with chestnuts, persimmons, and pears.

"Darn it," said Tarō to himself. "In spite of her fine looks, she's treating me like a horse or an ox, giving me this fruit all jumbled together in a basket without setting it out nicely on a lid or paper. It's too much! There must be something more to it. Let's see: she gave me the fruit all together, so that must mean that she wants to get together with me. And the chestnuts mean that she won't repeat the nutty things she said before,[341] the pears that she wishes to be paired only with me.[342] But what about the persimmons and salt? Well, I can use them together in a poem:

> Since this is the fruit of Naniwa Bay in Tsu,
> it has crossed no seas but is well pickled in salt.[343]

The lady overheard this and marveled at his exceptional sensitivity. Here indeed was an example of the proverbial "lotus blooming from the mire" and "gold wrapped in straw." "Here, take this," she said, passing him some ten sheets of paper. Tarō wondered at this, but concluded that, although she had written no message, she must want him to write a response. And so he composed:

> You give me mighty divine paper for my use.
> Could this mean that you think me a sacred shrine?[344]

"I can't hold out any longer!" she cried. "Bring him in!" She gathered together a pair of wide trousers, a robe, a court hat, and a sword for him to wear.

Delighted at this happy turn of events, Tarō Hijikasu wrapped his old hand-me-downs around his staff. She probably meant to lend him the new attire just for the night, and he would need his old rags again in the morning.

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341. This involves a pun on *kuri* (chestnut) and *kurigoto* (repetition). I have altered the original wording to create a pun in English.

342. This is a pun on *nashi* (pear) and *nashi* (none) (she has no other men).

343. The verse puns on *umiwataru* (to ripen) and *umiwataru* (to cross the sea). Tsu is an old name for Settsu, in the vicinity of Osaka, and thus the persimmons would not have been transported by sea.

344. Tarō puns on *kami* (paper) and *kami* (god).

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the highest of nobility. The Governor of Buzen heard about him and summoned him to an audience. Seeing Tarō so beautifully dressed, he remarked, "You are indeed a handsome man. What is your name?"

"Lazy Tarō."

This was so inappropriate that the Governor renamed him Uta no Saemon.[346]

Eventually, word reached the inner sanctum of the palace, and Tarō was summoned to report there at once. He tried to decline the honor, but to no avail. He rode in a carriage to the palace, and on his arrival he was ushered into the formal audience hall.

"I hear that you are a prodigy at linked verse. Compose a couple of links," ordered the Emperor. Just then, a warbler flew down, perched on a plum branch, and sang. Hearing this, Tarō recited:

> Is it because spring rain has spilled over the umbrella
> of plum blossoms that the warbler is bathed in tears?

"Do they call it a plum where you come from?" asked the Emperor. Without hesitation, Tarō replied:

> In Shinano the flower is called *baika*;
> in the capital what might they call the plum?

The Emperor was very impressed. "Who are your ancestors?" he asked.

"I have no ancestors."

The Emperor ordered him to inquire of the Deputy Governor of Shinano about his ancestry. The Deputy Governor in turn gave the commission to the local steward, and eventually the results were brought to the Emperor in a missive wrapped in rush matting. On examination, the Emperor learned that the Middle Captain of the Second Rank, the second son of the fifty-third emperor, Ninmyō,[347] also known as Fukakusa, had been exiled to Shinano, where he lived for many years. He had no children, and his desperation led him to make a pilgrimage to Zenkō Temple, where he petitioned the Amida Buddha. As a result, he was blessed with a son. When the child was but three years old, his parents died, and thus he dropped to a lowly status and was tainted with the dirt of humble commoners.

On reading this, the Emperor saw that Tarō was not far removed from the imperial line itself. He dubbed him the Middle Captain of Shinano and granted

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346. The meaning of the office title is unclear.

347. Ninmyō (833–850) is usually listed as the fifty-fourth emperor. He had many sons, some of whom succeeded to the throne, but nothing is known about the exile in question.

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correcting the girl when she was naughty; and by the time the young lady was ten, she had matured beautifully.

"Did you write this?" the nurse would say. "If you do your calligraphy practice nicely, I'll make you a beautiful doll."

The elder daughter was called the Lady of the East; the younger, the Lady of the West. All who set eyes on the nurse of the Lady of the East were terrified, vowing that they had never seen anyone quite so frightening. Thus she came to be known as the Dragon King. Also serving in the palace was a malicious gossip of a woman nicknamed the She-devil. This woman liked to visit the Lady of the East and criticize her sister to the west, then take off to the western wing, where she would speak ill of the Lady of the East.

The Dragon King had no problem with spreading tales about others but took quick offense when gossip centered on her own self. The She-devil took great pleasure in stirring up trouble and threw caution to the winds as she scurried back and forth between the two quarters. She usually stayed in the elder sister's apartments, so the Dragon King thought of her as a personal servant and confided in her without reserve.

"The Lady of the West spends all her time at calligraphy and poetry," taunted the She-devil.

"It's more than sufficient for most people to make an entry in an account book!" responded the Dragon King. "You listen too, my young lady. Doing nothing but writing poems and such won't fill an empty stomach, nor will it earn you a red cent or a single grain of rice. I'll teach you how to keep accounts and do sums; most people can't manage that!" And she wasted no time in starting the lessons.

"Look here: two times nine is eighteen."

"I see—does that mean twice nine?" asked the girl.

"That there is thirty-six."

"Four times nine is thirty-six."

"How well you catch on! No matter how skilled a bookkeeper your future husband might be, you'll always be able to hold your own. This is much better than wasting your time at painting, flower gathering, poetry, or calligraphy! Now this is really an accomplishment!"

"Just as your nurse says," added the She-devil, "it's a good skill to have."

"Never mind what those gossips over there might say, I'm teaching her a great art over here," said the Dragon King.

"Just as I always say. Where did you learn to do sums like that?"

"When I was mistress to a bookkeeper."

"I wonder who will tell her father about these lessons. It's certain that they'll manage to say nothing good about you! It makes me angry just to think about it!" said the She-devil.

What with the She-devil going around dropping carefully aimed artless remarks, it stood to reason that word of the Dragon King and her doings spread everywhere.

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I know. But I don't have an instrument, so I'll have to borrow the Minister's lute to teach her. People flaunt their knowledge of *The Tale of Genji*, but I know parts of *The Tales of the Heike* and can sing them anywhere. When people recite the *Genji*, I'll do the *Heike*. They won't show me up!

"When snow falls and melts down the tree limbs, how happy the crows must be . . . if only I could spend each and every season feeling as if it were the first of the new year . . . if I had a rice cake as wide as the sky, I'd gobble it up as if there were no tomorrow," she sang.[353]

"Of all the men I've known, when I think of my old pal Kon'ichi, I have to cry. I learned that song from him. When you feel that strongly about someone, I guess that you can't help showing it. Yes, I confess it."

"How funny it is to think of all those people who brag about their talents! You never told anyone of this!" said the She-devil. "Surely no one had any idea that you were the mistress of such a skill. I wondered why you were crying; well, it makes me cry too when I hear the reason."

There came a time when the Minister's lady said to her husband, "I've heard that the nursemaids are teaching the girls to play the koto and the biwa but I've not yet heard them play. There is a clear harvest moon tonight—shall we call them in to soothe you with their music?" The Minister agreed, and soon the young ladies arrived. It was decided to use the full moon as the theme for a poetry match. First the wife composed:

> I have passed fully half the fall gazing at the moon,
> yet nothing compares with the moon of this evening.

The Minister composed:

> Though I've not counted the nights, the beams of light bear witness,
> shining a mirror on the water: moon of an autumn night.

Then the older sister composed:

> Full mooncake in the sky—as much as I gaze
> it's in name only for I cannot eat it.

Everyone was horrified at this verse, but the Minister chuckled in amusement, commenting, "Truly, in name only . . . !" They all breathed a sigh of relief.

Presently, the musicians tuned their flutes and other instruments, and the company was treated to delightful music. Late at night, when the hearts of all were serene, the younger sister played the koto so charmingly that the Minister

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353. This is probably an intentionally garbled rendition of a contemporary song.

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The gist of a poem should be as fine and distinct as a crane at dusk. Learn well the poetry of the *Kokinshū* and the *Shinkokinshū*.[355]

Many things will move your heart as the years pass. In sadness and adversity, place your deepest faith in the gods and buddhas. When the gods are present, can there be any evil? Read the marvelous tales of *Genji*, *Sagoromo*, and *Ise* at least once, for they contain passages that are moving beyond compare. If you learn them now, you will never forget them.

Do not indulge in idle flirtation. People of taste do not exchange empty frivolous letters. Like a flower, a person in love blooms once; if you see your beloved too repeatedly, the blossom will wither. Be neither too distant nor too intimate in your relations. If you establish relations with a man lacking family connections, you will be regarded in the same light as is he, and that would be a pity. On the other hand, do not be overly distant with a suitor of quality. Let your love be as pure as newly fallen snow and your ties as close as the two halves of the Kamo Shrine. Keep your demeanor placid and remain calmly within the confines of your screen. Do not be too assertive when you entertain him, for nothing is as difficult as melting a man's heart.

Obey your parents' wishes as long as you live, and do not speak of odd or ugly things. Follow appropriate models of deportment, but do not attempt to tell others how they ought to behave, or you will be hated.

It is the way of this uncertain world that the pine on which one has depended withers and the needles on the lower branches scatter and disappear. After I leave this world of sadness, there will be few people remaining for you to rely on. Please remember that you cannot hide what those who serve you see and hear. Your status is such that your future is assured; in order that you gracefully learn your role, I have taken sole charge of your upbringing. I have piled up layers of quilts so that you not suffer exposure to the rough winds, only to worry that you might still feel your covers to be too scanty and become chilled as the waters of a cold spring; I've fretted that the light summer breeze stirred up by my fan might not be sufficiently cool. I've tried diligently to care for you even when I realized that the flower had already bloomed and as I rejoiced at the length of your strands of hair.[356] I've prayed night and day that someone would assume the task of serving you, but I have decided to leave things to the workings of your own good karma.

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355. The two most famous imperial poetry anthologies.

356. A noblewoman's hair was never cut; the older she became, the longer her hair grew.

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THE DEMON SHUTEN DŌJI (*SHUTEN DŌJI*)

Among contemporary literary historians, the reign of Emperor Ichijō (986–1011) is best remembered as the age of the great Heian women authors Sei Shōnagon, Murasaki Shikibu, Izumi Shikibu, and Akazome'emon. In the popular media of medieval and early modern Japan, however, Ichijō's era was perhaps better known for the terror of Shuten Dōji, a saké-drinking demon notorious for kidnapping beautiful and aristocratic young women from the capital and enslaving them in a kind of sadistic and pseudosexual bondage in his secret mountain lair. Endowed with a variety of paranormal powers, including the ability to fly, Shuten Dōji inhabits a mysterious realm beyond the confines of ordinary time and space—a magical estate, inaccessible to humans, where the seasons exist simultaneously.

As one of the most famous works in the otogi-zōshi subgenre of tales of monster-quelling crusades, *The Demon Shuten Dōji* (*Shuten Dōji*) is the grisly account of how the warrior Minamoto Yorimitsu (referred to here by the sinified reading of his name, Raikō) and five of his fearless retainers set out from the capital at the emperor's request on a nearly impossible mission to slay the shape-shifting demon and free his many captives. To accomplish their task, Yorimitsu and his men disguise themselves as *yamabushi*, mountain ascetics in the Shugendō cult, whose legendary founder is reported in early Japanese sources to have communed with demons and deities alike. In their yamabushi attire, the six heroes are empowered to bridge the boundary between the mundane and supernatural worlds. As they proceed on their quest, they rely on their swords and their wits—each in equal measure—as well as the divine intervention of the gods of Japan.

In its earliest surviving form, the story of Yorimitsu and Shuten Dōji dates to the fourteenth-century *Tale of Mount Ōe in Pictures and Words* (*Ōeyama ekotoba*), a two-scroll illustrated work now in the Itsuō Museum in Ikeda City, Osaka. Because of its immense popularity, the narrative was reproduced in an extraordinarily large number of painted scrolls and Nara picture books, and it became the subject of various dramatic works in the nō, puppet, and kabuki theaters. The following translation is based on the woodblock-printed text published by Shibukawa Seiemon of Osaka in his boxed-set anthology of short medieval fiction, *The Companion Library* (*Otogi bunko*, ca. 1716–1729).

Shibukawa's *Shuten Dōji* is notable among works of Muromachi fiction for its careful organizational structure, moving quickly and purposefully from the initial dramatic complication to the inevitable climax and obligatory happy ending, which was an established convention of the otogi-zōshi genre. Like all the works in Shibukawa's compendium, his *Shuten Dōji* is believed to be a close reproduction of a woodblock-printed *tanrokubon* ("red and green book," named for the simple coloring of its illustrations) published in the first half of the seventeenth century.

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Since the opening of heaven and earth in the distant past, our country has been a land of the gods, thriving with the Buddhist law. From the first human emperor to the Engi lord, with rectitude and piety our sovereigns reigned.[361] In their compassion for the people, their righteous rules were unsurpassed by even those of Yao and Shun.[362] Nevertheless, strange things came to happen in the world. There was a demon god who lived on Mount Ōe in Tanba Province, and every day after the sun had set, he would abduct unknown numbers of people from regions near and far. Of those he took from the capital, most were beautiful young women, seventeen or eighteen years old—and of these he took a great many.

Although all were to be pitied, none was to be more so than the Ikeda middle counselor, Kunitaka, servant to the retired emperor.[363] Greatly favored by his lord, the middle counselor lived in a prosperous home, replete with treasures of every kind. He had a single daughter, and as she was endowed with the thirty-two feminine charms, there was not one among those who saw or heard tell of her beauty whose heart was not overcome. Her parents doted on her with uncommon affection. At dusk on a certain day, however, this lovely daughter vanished without a trace. From her father Kunitaka to his wailing wife, her nurse, her nanny, the maids, and others, the entire household was turned upside down with grief.

In his terrible sorrow, Kunitaka summoned the captain of the imperial bodyguards of the left. "Now listen," Kunitaka said. "I've recently heard tell of a famous diviner, unrivaled in the capital, by the name of Muraoka no Masatoki. Bring him to me here." "Yes, sir," the captain replied, and he fetched the man to Kunitaka's mansion.

Alas, poor Kunitaka and his wife! Indifferent to shame or the prying eyes of others, they met with the diviner, to whom Kunitaka spoke: "See here, Masatoki—it's the way of the world that a man loves all his children, even if he's got five or ten of them. But I have only a single daughter, and last night at sundown she disappeared to who knows where. She's thirteen years old—born in the Year of the Tiger—and since the day she came into this world, we've never let her down from the veranda without her nurse and her nanny. We've even kept her out of the gusting wind! If this is the deed of some shape-shifting deceiver, why

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361. The first human emperor was the legendary Jinmu, who according to traditional calculations reigned from 660 B.C.E. The emperor of the Engi era was Daigo (885–930, r. 897–930).

362. Yao and Shun are two fabled emperors of ancient China renowned for their benevolent rule.

363. According to numerous alternative *Shuten Dōji* manuscripts, this retired emperor was Emperor Ichijō (980–1011, r. 986–1011).

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Village in Kii Province, and I am from Yamashiro near the capital.[366] We had our wives and children stolen by the demon Shuten Dōji on the other side of this mountain. That fiend! Now we've come here to take our revenge. I can tell by the looks of you priests that you're no ordinary men. In fact, you resemble those retainers the emperor sent to kill Shuten Dōji. Since the three of us had our families taken, you should let us be your guides. Set down your packs and rest awhile.

"As you say," Raikō replied, "we're weary from wandering about on these mountain roads. We'll rest, then." The warriors put down their packs. They took out the saké in the bamboo tubes and offered the three old men a drink. One of the old men spoke: "You've got to sneak inside somehow. The demon is always drinking saké, which is how he got the name Shuten Dōji, 'Drunkard Boy.'[367] He drinks his fill and then passes out in a stupor, dead to the world. As it happens, we have some special saké with us called Divine Miracle Wine, written with the characters for 'expedient means of the gods' and 'demon poison.' One sip of it and the monster will lose his ability to fly. Then, whether you cut him or stab him, he's unlikely to know it. But it's a tonic for you if you drink it yourselves, which is why it'll be called Divine Miracle Wine for ages to come.

"This will do you further wonders," the old man said, producing a star-crested helmet. "Wear it when you cut off the demon's head. It should keep you safe." He handed Raikō the helmet, together with the wondrous saké. The six warriors looked on, and realizing that these were the deities of the three shrines, they all were profoundly moved. The scene was awesome to behold, beyond the power of words to describe.

The three old men stepped out of their shelter in the rocks. "We will guide you now," they said, and began to climb up Senjō Peak. They passed some thirty yards through a dark and stony cavern and came out on a narrow river valley. "Continue climbing upstream," the old men said. "You will come upon a young lady, seventeen or eighteen years old. Question her closely. We will help you again when it's time to kill the demon god. We are the deities of the Sumiyoshi, Iwashimizu, and Kumano shrines." With these words, the three old men vanished into the air. The six warriors bowed down and prayed to the spot from which they had disappeared.

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366. The Kake District is the vicinity of Sumiyoshi Shrine; Otonashi Village is near the main Kumano Shrine; and Yamashiro Province (which extends into what is now the southern part of Kyoto City) is near Iwashimizu Hachiman Shrine.

367. According to the otogi-zōshi *Ibuki Dōji*, Shuten Dōji received his moniker at the age of seven because of his inordinate love of drinking. He is said to have taken after his father, Ibuki Yasaburō, who also was a notorious glutton and a drunk.

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Continuing up the river, the six men found a young lady, seventeen or eighteen years old, just as the deities had foretold. She was washing blood out of a cloth of some sort, weeping all the while. "Who are you?" Raikō asked.

"I am from the capital, my lord," the woman replied. "I was captured by the demon god one night and brought to this place. I have lost my dear father and mother, and my nanny and my nurse. Have pity on me, please, for this wretched state I'm in." The woman wept quiet, copious tears. Again, she spoke: "This is a horrible place. It's known as the demon's lair, so humans never come. And yet you priests . . . you've made it this far? Take me back to the city, please!" Once more she broke down and cried.

"Whose child are you in the capital?" Raikō asked. The woman answered: "My lord, I am the only daughter of the Hanazono middle counselor. But I'm not alone—there are more than ten of us in all. Recently the daughter of the Ikeda middle counselor Kunitaka was brought here as well. The demon loves us for a while, but then he squeezes the blood from our bodies, calls it saké, and drinks it. He slices up our flesh and calls it a side dish! Watching him eat us like that is a sad thing indeed. Just this morning the daughter of the Horikawa middle counselor was squeezed for her blood, too. It breaks my heart to be washing out her robe now . . . it's just too awful!" And again, the woman began to cry. Although fierce enough to face down a demon, the six warriors found themselves similarly choked with tears.

"We've come here to slay the demon and return you all to the capital," Raikō said, "so please explain to us everything you can about his home." The woman could scarcely believe her ears. Swayed by their intentions, she set about telling them what she knew. "Follow this river upstream," she said, "and you will see an iron wall with an iron gate. Demons will be gathered at the entrance, standing guard. Somehow you have to slip inside. The palace is lapis lazuli, bedecked with jewels—building after building, all in a row. It's patterned after the four seasons.[368] There's an inner iron chamber called the Iron Hall, and every night the demon gathers us there and makes us love him by massaging his arms and legs while he lolls about on the floor. His henchmen guard the entrance—Hoshikuma Dōji, Kuma Dōji, Torakuma Dōji, and Kane Dōji. Together they're called the Four Heavenly Kings. Their strength is said to be beyond compare.

"As for Shuten Dōji, he's tall with a light red complexion. His hair is cropped, and it hangs loose and disheveled like a child's. He's human in the daytime, but at night he's a terror . . . more than ten feet tall, worse than anything I can say! He drinks saké all the time, and since he's forever passing out drunk, he'll never notice if he's being killed. You've got to get inside somehow, get him

368. According to a Tōyō University manuscript, the four seasons are simultaneously present in four gardens on the four sides of Shuten Dōji's palace.

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room like this, I've got an iron chamber called the Iron Hall. At night I gather my women there and make them massage my arms and legs while I laze about on the floor. Do you think any Heavenly King ever had it better?

"Still, there is one man who weighs on my heart—a wicked warrior by the name of Raikō, unrivaled in the capital. There's no one in Japan who can equal his strength. Among his men are a certain Sadamitsu, Suetake, Kintoki, Tsuna, and Hōshō, every one of them trained in the ways of letters and war. It's the thought of those six that gives me grief. And do you know why? It's because once in the spring I sent my demon attendant Ibaraki Dōji on a mission to the city, and he came to blows with that Tsuna at Seventh Avenue and Horikawa Street. Ibaraki got the idea to sneak up on Tsuna by changing himself into a woman, but when he grabbed hold of Tsuna's topknot and tried to bring him here, Tsuna pulled a blade three feet, six inches long and lopped off his arm! Ibaraki eventually got his arm back by some plan or other, and now he's fine. But it's because of Tsuna and his type that I avoid the capital."

Shuten Dōji stopped and stared at Raikō. "You people sure are strange," he said. "Now that I've got a good look at your eyes, I can see you're Raikō. And you there, you're that Tsuna who cut off Ibaraki's arm. As for you other four, you're Sadamitsu, Suetake, Kintoki, and Hōshō. My eyes aren't likely wrong. It's upsetting, really. I want you to leave." Shuten Dōji's color changed as he became increasingly agitated. "All you demons," he said, addressing his attendants, "be on your guard or you'll get hurt. I'll be going now too, I think."

Raikō knew that all would be lost if he failed to talk his way through this. Because he was a man of both culture and strength, he burst into laughter, showing not the slightest trace of alarm. "What happy words!" he cried. "So you think we mountain ascetics resemble the fiercest warriors in Japan! This is the first time I've ever heard of that Raikō and Suetake, and I've certainly never seen them. But from what you've just said, it sounds like they're an evil bunch. So it's unfortunate—terrible, in fact—that we should look like them. It's our religious practice to save others' lives, which is why we take the mountain roads for our homes and give our bodies to starving wolves and tigers—to rescue all beings, sentient and nonsentient alike!

"Shakyamuni Buddha was known by the name Shūfū in one of his previous existences. He went out into the various kingdoms to perform ascetic rites. Once when he was passing along a mountain road, he heard an unknown being in the depths of a valley chanting the phrase, 'All things are impermanent.' When he descended to have a look, he found a fearsome demon with eight heads and nine legs. He approached and asked, 'Will you tell me the rest of the verse you were chanting?' The demon replied, 'That's easy enough, but I'm starving and I've lost all my strength. I'll chant it for you if you'll just give me someone to eat.' 'That's no problem at all,' Shūfū said; 'I'll be your food if you'll recite the remaining part.' The demon was elated, and he repeated the lines, 'Those that rise will also fall; when rising and falling themselves have ceased, that quiet

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For those who were listening closely, the song said that the mountain ascetics themselves were to be made into saké and side dishes.

Raikō stood up to pour Shuten Dōji another drink. After watching him accept the cup, Tsuna jumped to his feet and began to dance. Two or three times he sang:

toshi wo hete	The years go by,
oni no iwaya ni	and spring it comes
haru no kite	to the demon's lair.
kaze ya sasoite	Drawn by the wind,
hana o chirasan	the blossoms there to scatter—
omoshiro ya	so pleasingly indeed!

The song explains that the demons were to be laid to waste like blossoms in a storm—but of this the monsters were completely unaware. Considering it a most enjoyable verse, they went on becoming increasingly drunk.

Shuten Dōji spoke: "You demons—make sure you keep our guests well entertained! I'm going to leave these two ladies here in my place while I take a rest. I'll see you again tomorrow." And he retired deep inside the mansion. After observing their master depart, the remaining demons lay down here and there and slept as if they were dead.

Raikō beckoned to the two young women. "Whose daughters are you in the capital?" he asked. "My lord," the first replied, "I am the only daughter of the Ikeda middle counselor, Kunitaka. I was recently abducted and brought to this place—taken from my dear father and mother, my nanny, and my nurse. Have pity on me, please, for this wretched state I'm in!" The woman wept quiet, copious tears. "And you?" Raikō asked the other. "My lord, I am the younger daughter of the Yoshida consultant.[374] Alas that my life has yet to end!" The two women cried together now, heedless of the sound, as if to lose their senses. "How right that you should weep," Raikō said. "Yet tonight we are to slay the demon and return you to the capital to see your dear fathers and mothers. So please lead us to his bed." The women were amazed. "If that is your intention," they replied, "then we will certainly show you where he lies. Prepare yourselves, please." Raikō was overjoyed, and he turned to his men. "Well then," he said, "each of you to your armor!"

The warriors hid themselves to the side. Raikō donned his armor with the scarlet lacings—the Randen Chain. He fit the star-crested helmet he had received from the deities of the three shrines inside his matching Lion Lord helmet, and he placed the two on his head. Grasping his Bloodsucker sword

374. An inconsistency in the text. When Shuten Dōji summoned the women to join him and Raikō for a drink, this one was identified as the daughter of the Hanazono middle counselor.

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Toyonari and Chūjōhime wept to the heavens and writhed on the floor, but it was all for naught. Matters could not be left as they were, so Toyonari had his wife taken to a certain place and there transformed into a wisp of smoke. He tried to throw himself on the consuming flames, but others held him back by his sleeves. "You may want to go with her," they said, "but on the journey of the dead, even teachers and students, masters and servants are pulled apart. It's the same for husbands and wives, and brothers and sisters, too. How could you ever join her? In any case, she must be pleased at the depth of your feelings."

Everyone cried, whether or not they were related, and because Toyonari was restrained, he acquiesced. He spent the night performing various Buddhist rites and dedicatory services. Gathering his wife's bones in the dawn, he wept and intoned a single poem:

The night I've spent in depths of grief, and in the morning light I see—
smoke she's become, vanished without a trace.

Toyonari made it his practice to read a sutra in the daytime and recite the nenbutsu at night, and thus the days and months passed by.

Once when Chūjōhime was viewing cherry blossoms in the spring of her seventh year, two small children came near her to play. A man of about thirty and a woman of twenty-six or seven approached. The man picked up the little boy, the woman picked up the little girl, and together they carried them away. "Who are those people?" Chūjōhime asked, watching them go. Her nurse replied: "They're the two children's father and mother." Chūjōhime gave the matter some thought. "Why do I only have a father and no mother?" The nurse wept and explained: "It's because your mother died when you were three." Chūjōhime was especially sad to think that she had not known this until now, and she hurried off to see her father.

"It doesn't matter who," Chūjōhime said, "but I want someone who'll be my mother." She was so persistent that Toyonari took a wife that very summer. Chūjōhime embraced and obeyed the woman as if she were her own flesh and blood. Later, she summoned a venerable priest and received from him instruction in the Shōsan Pure Land Sutra.[381] Reciting each of its six scrolls every day, she prayed for her mother's enlightenment in the afterworld. Her father was endlessly moved, but her stepmother resented her and berated her as a matter of course. Toyonari paid it no mind, assuming that to be the way of all stepmothers and stepchildren. In fact, the wife plotted morning and night how she might get rid of Chūjōhime.

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381. The Shōsan Pure Land Sutra (Shōsan jōdo-kyō) is a mid-seventh-century translation of the Smaller Sukhavativyuha sutra, better known in Japan by Kumarajiva's translation of 402, entitled Amida-kyō.

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By the time she was thirteen, Chūjōhime's beauty was without peer, and the emperor repeatedly sent requests that she be made his wife. Toyonari was boundlessly happy. The stepmother, however, was displeased. She took a man into her confidence and, dressing him in a formal cap and court costume, had him venture in and out of Chūjōhime's rooms. Next, she spoke to her husband: "Chūjōhime's up to no good, and when some scandal comes of it, don't say it's because I'm her stepmother. You just keep a quiet eye on her rooms." Thus she made her false complaint.

One evening when Toyonari and his wife were spying on Chūjōhime's chambers, a young man of about twenty, clad in a folded court cap and everyday attire, emerged from her room. The stepmother turned to her husband: "Have I been lying all this time? There's nothing strange in a girl's exchanging vows with one fellow, but sometimes there's a man in a crown cap and matching robes; sometimes there's a man in a standing cap and ordinary wear; and sometimes there's a man with a singlet pulled over his head. I had a look at that one, and he was a priest! For her to be seeing so many like this . . . it's terribly wanton!" The wife spoke through make-believe tears.

"If there's one thing a person should never have," Toyonari thought to himself, "it's a daughter. What with her mother feeling so sorry for her at the end, worrying how she'd ever get on in the world—it makes it even sadder now, her behaving so shamelessly! If news of this gets out tomorrow, there'll be nothing funnier at the palace than 'Toyonari's girl.'"

Toyonari summoned one of his samurai retainers: "Take Chūjōhime to Mount Hibari in the Arita region of Kii Province and cut off her head. And be sure to say a lot of prayers for her when you're done." "My honored lord," the warrior replied, "I would never disobey your command."

The warrior led Chūjōhime into the wilds of Mount Hibari and there explained to her what her father had said. Chūjōhime spoke: "The karma from my previous lives is wretched, which is why because of someone's lies, I'm to die at your hands. It can't be helped. But I do ask that you give me a little time. When I was seven, I received a copy of the Shōsan Pure Land Sutra, and even though I've recited it for my dead mother every day since then, I have not yet read it today. I want to recite it for my father, as a prayer, and for my mother, so that she might be released from the cycle of birth and death and achieve instant enlightenment. As for myself, after I'm put to the sword, it will help me avoid the torments of the *ashura* and find my way to the Pure Land."[382]

Not being made of stone or wood, the warrior gave her time. Chūjōhime withdrew the jeweled scrolls from deep inside her robes. After chanting a little of each, she turned to the west, pressed her palms together and prayed: "As for

382. The *ashura* are a race of warring demons in one of the subhuman planes of the six realms of existence.

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the sutra reading I have now performed, may the merit of the first scroll avail my father, the merit of the second lead to my mother's Pure Land rebirth, and the merit of the third, together with the nenbutsu I shall now invoke, permit my Pure Land reception on the same lotus as my mother."

Having pledged the benefits of her deed, she turned to the warrior: "Make sure you conceal my body, no matter what. And before you show my head to my father, do your best to wash it clean. I shall recite the nenbutsu until I am suitably composed. Then, after ten more invocations, quickly take my life." Putting her ankle-length hair up in buns high on her head, she turned to the west, pressed her palms together, and recited the nenbutsu exactly one thousand times. She spoke: "Praise Amida Buddha of the Western Paradise. Though I may be mired in the sins of the Five Obstructions and the Three Obediences, I call on you now, by the power of the nenbutsu and in accord with your Original Vow, to lead me to your holy land.[383] Dear Amida, I also ask that you bear no ill will against this man for cutting off my head. He cannot refuse my father's command. Please receive him, too, on a single dais, just as you do the most heinous of criminals." She quietly chanted the nenbutsu ten times and stretched out her neck.

Overwhelmed by Chūjōhime's selfless prayer, the warrior broke down in tears. Her appearance at that time was no different from the autumn moon just before it crests the mountain ridge.[384] Dazzled by the beauty of her lotus lips and the delicate line of her jaw, he felt as if her loving gaze could part the clouds before a crescent moon. The snowy whiteness of her skin was beyond compare. His vision blurred and his will disappeared; he cast away his sword as his senses reeled. Chūjōhime looked up. "Listen here," she said, "what's an incompetent oaf like you doing taking orders from my father? You've brought me all this way, and now you're going to make me lose my concentration. Hurry up, please."

The warrior thought long and hard, and he pitied her for the feelings in her heart. "If I were to take her life, the reward I'd receive would never last a thousand, much less ten thousand, years. I'll hide her away in some rocky cleft and save her instead." Having made up his mind, he prostrated himself before the girl and explained his intent.

Making use of a space between some boulders, the warrior placed Chūjōhime in a dwelling with a woven brushwood door. He summoned his wife and instructed her to gather firewood from the peak, collect water from the valley,

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383. The Five Obstructions thwart a woman from five forms of rebirth, including that of a buddha. The Three Obediences are a woman's obligation to obey her father, her husband, and, finally, her son. The Five Obstructions and the Three Obediences are commonly cited in medieval texts as a metaphor for the burden faced by women. The Original Vow is Amida Buddha's vow to save all sentient beings who call on him by name.

384. The moon is a traditional symbol of Buddhist enlightenment.

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attendants wept at the thought of Chūjōhime's devotion, extending as it did to the world beyond. After a while, Toyonari choked back his tears. "It's the way of the world that we all must die," he said, "so we shouldn't lose ourselves in mourning." He pressed a sleeve to his face and cried. Chūjōhime talked with him about many things, cheering his heart. By the time she left the sitting room he was greatly reassured.

Late at night, Chūjōhime hurriedly set out. She had been sad to leave her dilapidated mountain hovel; how much greater now was her sorrow for the Nara palace! Knowing that she would lose her beloved family and friends, all she could do was cry. The journey from Nara to Taima Temple is seven leagues, and because she walked, her feet were soon torn and bleeding. Concentrating on her desire for the Way, she hastened onward and eventually arrived. She proceeded to the monks' quarters, where she asked to be ordained. "From the looks of you, you're no commoner," a priest said. "If I were to give you the vows, I'd surely be punished for it later. What's more, who's a lowly person like me to grant your request?" Accordingly, he refused. Clasping her hands in supplication, Chūjōhime spoke: "My father and mother died when I was a child; I've even lost my nurse, the one person I could trust. There's no one I can count on now, and all I want is to be reborn in the Pure Land. Once I've taken orders, I'll put compassion above all else. Why do you make excuses when my heart's turned to the Buddha? Please just let me take the tonsure." The priest could not deny her again, so he shaved her head and gave her the Buddhist name Senni-biku.

Having achieved her principal desire, Chūjōhime secluded herself in Taima Temple and pronounced a great prayer vow: "If it is true that I am to attain rebirth in the Pure Land, then within seven days I shall venerate the living Amida Buddha before my very eyes. If I do not, then from this day forward I shall never set foot outside these temple gates!" Steadfast in her oath, she remained constantly inside the temple hall.

Six days passed. At the hour of the cock on the sixteenth day of the Sixth Month of a certain year in Tenpyō-Shōhō,[389] an apparitional nun—golden hued and majestic, awesome to behold—appeared before Chūjōhime in ecclesiastical robes, her sleeves crossed. "I know the sincerity of your fervent devotion," she said, "and this is why I have come. Listen carefully, Chūjōhime: I shall weave a likeness of Paradise for you to worship. Bring me a hundred horseloads of lotus stalks." Chūjōhime was ecstatic. Shedding tears of gratitude, she pressed her palms together, faced the apparitional nun, and bowed three times. She sent word to her father at his mansion, and he, too, was overjoyed. Toyonari

389. Tenpyō-Shōhō (749–757). The "hour of the cock" is approximately 6:00 P.M., or dusk. Calculating from the date of Chūjōhime's death, the nun appeared in the sixth year of Tenpyō-Shōhō, or 754.

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The apparitional nun dyes the lotus-stalk thread in a shallow pool. Later, a mysterious young woman (depicted here as a nun) weaves the Taima Mandala. (From the Katei Bunko Collection, by permission of the University of Tokyo Library)

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informed the emperor, who, in his pleasure, had 120 horseloads of lotus stalks gathered from various places and delivered to Taima Temple.

Together, Chūjōhime and the apparitional nun spun the stalks into thread. They dug a shallow well at the northern edge of the temple grounds and dipped the thread in the water. When they had done so, the thread was dyed in five, eight, and a multitude of colors. This is why that particular pool is called the Dying Field Pond. It is also known as the Reflecting Field Pond.

On the twenty-third of that same month, at the hour of the cock, a beautiful young woman of seventeen or eighteen approached. Looking like a heavenly being, she turned to the apparitional nun and spoke: "Has the promised thread been dyed?" The nun replied: "The thread is prepared." The young woman asked to be brought three quarts of oil and three sheaves of straw. She poured the oil upon the straw, making torches, and erected a loom in the northwest corner of the temple hall. That night, in the three-hour period between the dog and the ox,[390] she wove a mandala ten feet tall and five feet wide. She mounted it on a single bamboo pole and hung it in the main temple hall. Turning to Chūjōhime, she and the nun began to preach in identical voices. Chūjōhime's aspiration to the Way had been profound before; now, revering the miracles taking place before her eyes, she received the Buddha's holy instruction:

> As for the sanctity of the mandala: Amida, Kannon and Seishi are seated upon great jeweled flower thrones. The Thirty-seven Exalted Beings sit

390. Six hours, from approximately 8:00 P.M. to 2:00 A.M.

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cross-legged, shoulder to shoulder, while multitudes of transformed buddhas, gloriously adorned, occupy the four types of lotus blossoms in the Lake of Eight Virtues.[391] Some pole boats of the Saving Vow, and some conduct sermons in groups. Hosts of bodhisattvas pay obeisance to Amida at the feet of jeweled trees, whose branches are filled with glittering palaces. At its northern edge, the mandala depicts the rites of contemplation on clear water and the setting sun, and at its southern edge, it displays the thirteen Pure Land meditative practices.[392] In its lower center, it contains the three meditations on the nine grades and three ranks,[393] as well as the ten thousand practices and goodnesses of all the various teachings of the Larger and Smaller Vehicles.[394] Those who worship this mandala will cut the bonds of delusion and achieve ultimate enlightenment. Disdaining neither life nor death, they shall reach the shore of nirvana.

Overcome by the awesome majesty of what she had heard, Chūjōhime was hard put to restrain her tears. The apparitional women prepared to leave. Weeping, Chūjōhime took hold of their sleeves. "Wait, please—who are you?" she asked the nun. "And you, who wove the mandala, who are you? I owe you both so much, I'd be no better than an animal if I didn't repay your kindness. And when I long to see you, I can look up into the sky—whichever way it is—and take comfort there." The nun spoke: "Did you not know? I am Amida Buddha, founder of the Western Pure Land Paradise. The young woman who wove the mandala is the disciple to my left, the bodhisattva Kannon.[395] It is because you are a woman that we have appeared to you as a nun and a woman. We have come to this filthy world because of the excellence of your vow." The nun offered Chūjōhime a verse in four lines:[396]

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391. The Lake of Eight Virtues is a reservoir in the heart of the Pure Land. In Pure Land paintings, the Thirty-seven Exalted Beings surround the triad of Amida, Kannon, and Seishi.

392. The first thirteen of sixteen meditative practices listed in the *Kanmuryōju-kyō* as a means of visualizing the Pure Land. The contemplations on clear water (*suisōkan*) and the setting sun (*nissōkan*) are contained in these thirteen.

393. The last three of the preceding sixteen Pure Land meditations. The nine grades (*kuhon*) are nine grades of rebirth in the Pure Land; the three ranks (*sanpai*) are the three ranks of people who are reborn there.

394. The Larger and Smaller Vehicles (*daishōjō*) refer to Mahayana and Hinayana Buddhism, respectively.

395. In representations of the Amida triad, Kannon sits to Amida's left, and Seishi, to the right.

396. This is a variation of a Chinese verse attributed to Amida Buddha in accounts of the Taima Mandala in *Kokon chomonjū* (1254), *Shiju hyaku innen shū* (1257), *Taima mandara engi* (mid- to late thirteenth century), *Ippen hijiri e* (1299), *Genkō shakusho* (1322), and other sources.

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Amida's saving vow excludes neither high nor low, rich nor poor, but promises to lead all who recite the nenbutsu to salvation. It is most important that we chant Amida's name with a tranquil heart and achieve rebirth in the Pure Land. This is why the mandala came to us as it did.

[Introduction and translation by R. Keller Kimbrough]

LITTLE SONGS (*KOUTA*)

Kouta (little songs) was a popular song genre that appeared in the late Northern and Southern Courts period (1336–1392) and peaked in the mid-Muromachi period. In free meter, these kouta became popular with all major social classes: nobility, samurai, priests, and commoners, particularly in the capital.

Early medieval kouta appear to have been sung by female entertainers like dancer-singers (*shirabyōshi*), female puppeteers (*kugutsume*), and women of pleasure (*yūjo*). By the Muromachi period, kouta had also become popular with sarugaku and dengaku mime-dance-singer performers, who were the predecessors of nō performers, and with renga poets, who performed them at court and for aristocrats. The *Collection for Quiet Singing* (*Kanginshū*, edited in 1518), is the most famous collection of this genre, representing kouta in the same way that the *Ryōjin hishō* represents *imayō* (modern-style songs), Heian popular songs. The sense of vitality, energy, and freedom found in the kouta is said to reflect the spirit of "lower overthrowing the upper" (*gekokujō*) found in Muromachi culture.

The songs were mainly sung to a *shakuhachi*, a bamboo flute, but they also could be sung to nothing more than the beat of a fan. In the Tokugawa period, kouta became part of women's kabuki dance and songs and were sung to a three-string shamisen. Muromachi kouta were succeeded by the *ryūtatsu-bushi*, begun by the Nichiren monk Ryūtatsu (1527–1611), mainly in *imayō*-style 7/5/7/5 meter, with a sprinkling of 7/7/7/5 songs. These became popular around 1600 and became the foundation for kouta in the Tokugawa period.

COLLECTION FOR QUIET SINGING (*KANGINSHŪ*, 1518)

The *Collection for Quiet Singing*, like the *Kokinshū*, has two prefaces, one in Chinese and the other in Japanese. The editor was apparently well versed in waka, renga, and Gozan (Five Mountains) kanshi and had had a Confucian education. According to the *kana* preface, he was a recluse whose hut looked out on Mount Fuji. This person may have been Sōchō (1448–1532), a noted renga poet and the main disciple of Sōgi, who had a similar lifestyle and was acquainted with the Gozan school and with the eccentric Zen priest-poet Ikkyū (1394–1481).

The collection consists of 311 songs, the same number as that of the *Book of Songs* (*Shi jing*), the Confucian classic of Chinese poetry. The poems are labeled according to song category, the largest being kouta (231 songs), followed by *Yamato-bushi* (Yamato

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tunes), songs performed by Yamato sarugaku performers. As much as 80 percent of the kouta are songs about love between men and women, and they have inherited the tradition of waka love poetry. At the same time, the songs are diverse and reveal new voices. The rhythm varies from 7/5/7/5 meter to colloquial free verse. Kouta began as songs in the streets, for commoners and townspeople (*machishū*) in the capital, but when they became popular with aristocrats, samurai, and scholar-priests (like Ikkyū), they combined both the vulgar and the refined, the popular and the cultured.

Selected Songs

16

hito no sugata wa	She looked so tender,
hana utsubo yasashi	a quiver of flowers,
sashite	I placed my arrows in
outari ya	and bore it on my back!
uso no kawa	But now I see the quiver was
utsubo	a skin of lies.[399]

33

shincha no chatsubo	You're a vessel
yo nō	full of fresh tea leaves.
irete no nochi wa	After I enter,
kochi ya shiranu	I forget the old tea,
kochi ya shiranu	I forget the old tea.[400]

55

nani shō zo	What to do with you,
kusunde	so serious, so sane?
ichigo wa yume yo	This life is a dream,
tada kurue	just play, go crazy![401]

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399. Kouta peaked at the same time as renga. One consequence is that the form of kouta like this, with three distinct but linked sections, resembles the linking pattern of renga.

400. The fresh tea leaves is a metaphor for a young girl or virgin, and the tea vessel implies the female genitals. Tea leaves grow old quickly and lose their taste. *Kochi*, which means "I," is a homonym for "old tea."

401. This song is part of a series (nos. 49–55) on the same topic of the "Floating World" (*ukiyo*). The songs take the familiar topic of impermanence, but with humor, lightness, and an almost decadent attitude, reflecting a shift from the earlier medieval notion of ukiyo as "a world of suffering."

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from stones.[409] So I view them as noble, just as the barking of a village dog can lead to enlightenment, or as the belling of a stag can reveal the Truth. Perhaps he who takes up this collection will find it a morsel to whet a drinker's thirst.

Autumn

81–82

keikai sureba	When debts pile up,
aki zo nao uki	autumn is even sadder.
tsuyu shimo no	As frosty dew falls,
furu ni sode sae	he gives up even his robe
shichi ni shite	as a pledge for a loan.[410]

87–88

tsubururu mo ari	Some are ruined;
tsuburenu mo ari	some are not.
akikaze ni	From the branches
kozue no jukushi	in the autumn wind,
mata ochite	another ripe persimmon falls.[411]

91–92

osorenagara mo	Trying to insert it
irete koso mire	while filled with awe.

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plum) and *hōshi* (monk) with overtones of a legend in *Shishuo xinyu* in which Cao Cao (Emperor Wu) tells his thirsty men that he knows of a plum tree up ahead, at the mere mention of which his men's mouths start to water.

409. "Those who look for pears but pick up chestnuts" refers to the *kurinomotoshū* (literally, "those beneath the chestnut tree"), meaning those who pursue haikai, in contrast to the *kakinomotoshū*, those who follow Kakinomoto (literally, "beneath the persimmon tree") Hitomaro—that is, classical renga poets. "Look for pears" (*nashi o motome*) is homophonic with "look for nothingness." "Pears" and "chestnuts" are associated words.

410. In classical poetry, autumn was closely associated with sadness. The link here parodies that aesthetic association by making the cause of sadness a very secular matter of accumulating debt.

411. "Ruined" (*tsuburu*) can suggest any number of disasters, such as going bankrupt or losing face. The added verse unexpectedly invokes ripe persimmons, an autumn delicacy, some of which have fallen and some of which have not.

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wa ga ashi ya	My foot
tarai no mizu no	in a water basin
tsuki no kage	reflecting the moon.[412]

Love

135–136

muma no ue ni te	Making love to a temple boy
chigo to chigireri	on top of a horse.

yamadera no	At a mountain temple
shōgi no ban o	they use a chess board
karimakura	for a pillow.[413]

145–146

kaki no anata o	Through a hole in the fence
nozokite zo miru	he steals a look.

ware hitori	Getting a grip on himself,
nigirite netaru	he lies alone
yomosugara	all night long.[414]

Miscellaneous

227–228

shukke no soba ni	Beside the monk
netaru nyōbō	lies a lady.

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412. "While filled with awe" (*osorenagara mo*) in the previous verse suggests a forbidden coupling between a low-ranking man, perhaps a servant, and a highborn woman. This scene is subverted by the added verse in which the man's diffidence comes from his reluctance to defile with his dirty foot the water, an image of purity in Buddhism, and the reflection in the basin of the moon, a Buddhist symbol of enlightenment. A variant is in *Inu Tsukubashū*, nos. 140–141.

413. In the medieval male monastery, pederasty was common, and haikai depict the relationships between priests and temple boys (*chigo*) in varying degrees of explicitness. The acrobatic improbability of the first verse is explained in the second by the use of the *shōgi* (Japanese chess) board as a pillow, with a horse piece finding its way beneath them. The mountain temple suggests Enryaku-ji on Mount Hiei, center of the Tendai Buddhist sect.

414. The first verse recalls the way that many romances begin in *The Tale of Genji* and other classical tales, when a young noble peeps at a lady through a fence. But in the added verse here, the man is only frustrated by the titillating view of the lady's private parts, and so takes matters into his own hands. *Anata* (across the way) phonically implies *ana* (hole).

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Henjō ni	Hidden from Henjō
kakusu Komachi ga	is Komachi's
utamakura	poem-pillow.[415]

371–372

nigiri hosomete	Gripping it, squeezing it,
gutto irekeri	plunging it in!

hachatsubo no	Into a small-mouthed
kuchi no hosoki ni	jar, a big bag
ōbukuro	of tea leaves.[416]

MONGREL TSUKUBA COLLECTION
(*INU TSUKUBASHŪ*, CA. 1530)

The *Newly Selected Mongrel Tsukuba Collection* (*Shinsen inu Tsukubashū*), better known as the *Mongrel Tsukuba Collection*, is the best-known haikai collection from the medieval period. The *inu* (mongrel) in the title implies something both similar to and radically different from the *Tsukuba Collection* (mid-fourteenth century), the classical renga anthology edited by Nijō Yoshimoto in the Northern and Southern Courts period. Attributed to Yamazaki Sōkan (1465–1533), the *Mongrel Tsukuba Collection* is thought to have been started around 1530, after which it was added to incrementally, by both Sōkan (in whose hand several different manuscripts survive) and later editors, with the result that no single text is authoritative. Although early manuscripts are entitled *Haikai renga* (*Haikai Linked Verse*) or *Haikai rengashō*, by the time versions of the work began to be printed in the Tokugawa period, it had come to be known by its current title. Little is known about Sōkan except that he served the Ashikaga shogun and later took holy vows and lived west of the capital, in Yamazaki.

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415. Two of the so-called Six Poetic Immortals of the *Kokinshū* era were Priest Henjō and Ono no Komachi. The added verse implies that despite their intimacy, Komachi remains concerned about her poetic rival's reading her "poem-pillow" (*utamakura*), a list or handbook of poetic material, a term doubly appropriate in the context of sleeping together. The scene recalls an episode related in both *Gosenshū* and *Yamato monogatari* (NKBT 9:335–341) in which Komachi, on a pilgrimage, has a chance encounter with Henjō, whom she had known before he took the tonsure. She composes a waka asking to borrow a robe against the cold, and he responds with another saying that since he has only one, they will have to share it as they sleep. In that story, their relationship goes no further.

416. An implicitly lewd verse is wittingly transformed into something surprisingly innocent. A hidden joke lies in the fact that a woman's private parts were vulgarly known as the "tea jar" (*chatsubo*) and the man's parts as a "big bag" (*ōbukuro*). A variant appears in *Inu Tsukubashū* (Tōkyō daigaku toshokan ms.), no. 257.

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The variant used here has 322 linked-verse couplets divided into six sections: the four seasons (spring, summer, autumn, winter), love, and miscellaneous. These are followed by a section of ninety-three hokku (opening verses), also ordered by the seasons. Even though the writers of the poems are listed as anonymous, many have been identified as the renga poets Sōgi, Kensai, and Sōchō, and the noted haikai poets Sōkan and Moritake.

Spring

kasumi no koromo	The robe of haze
suso wa nurekeri	is soaked at the hem
Saohime no	Spring has come,
haru tachinagara	and the goddess Saohime
shito o shite	pisses where she stands.[417]

Love

oyobanu koi o	A love beyond one's reach
suru zo okashiki	is certainly ridiculous!
ware yori mo	In bed behind
ōwakazoku no	a young man
ato ni nete	too tall for him![418]

Miscellaneous

kiritaku mo ari	To cut down
kiritaku mo nashi	or not to cut down[419]
nusubito o	Catching a thief
toraete mireba	and finding him
waga ko nari	to be your own child.

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417. The maeku, identified as a spring verse by the seasonal word "haze" (*kasumi*), is a puzzle, asking the next verse to explain how the "robe of haze" (*kasumi no koromo*, an elegant waka expression) can be soaked at the hem. The poet, perhaps Sōkan himself, rises to the challenge by clothing Saohime, the eminently refined goddess of spring, in the robe of haze and then abruptly undercutting the elegant image with the earthy last line, introduced by a *kakekotoba* (pivot word) between "Spring has come" (*haru tachi*) and "stands" (*tachinagara*).

418. The first verse indicates impossible love due to differences in social station. The second verse twists that into impossible male–male sex because the difference in height is insurmountable. This also appears in *Chikuba kyōginshū*, nos. 139–140.

419. This fourteen-syllable maeku is followed by three alternative seventeen-syllable tsukeku, each of which gives a different interpretation to the same maeku. This set and the next are from a different variant than that of the SNKS.

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hero of the story, and Nakamitsu, his hapless and conflicted retainer, Otohime demonstrates her indomitable courage and moral conviction by choosing to abandon her luxurious life in order to seek out and join her damaged, cursed lover.

In its earliest form, the story of Shintokumaru can be traced to an account of the Indian Prince Kunala, a son of Aśoka, imported to Japan in Buddhist sutras and reproduced in *Konjaku monogatari shū* (4:4) and a variety of other texts. Although maligned by his stepmother, exiled by his father, and later blinded as a result of his stepmother's evil machinations, Kunala is eventually reunited with his father, and his sight is miraculously restored. By the fifteenth century, the prince's story became that of Shintokumaru (also known as Shuntokumaru), as we can see from its early dramatization in the nō play *The Staggering Priest* (*Yoroboshi*), composed by Kanze Motomasa (d. 1432) with a *kuse* by Zeami. Whereas *Yoroboshi* is decidedly didactic in tone, containing a homiletic history of the Tennō-ji temple and an endorsement of the Pure Land Buddhist meditation on the setting sun (*nissōkan*), the sekkyō-bushi *Shintokumaru* focuses instead on the all-too-human foibles of its characters and the love that blossoms between Shintokumaru and Otohime. The Buddhism of the tale is soteriological rather than philosophical, for in the world of *Shintokumaru*, even the law of karma can be undone with appropriately fervent prayer or devotion. The living statue of the bodhisattva Kannon at Kiyomizu Temple is an important figure in the work, and the adoration she receives for her willingness to grant worldly requests, regardless of their moral temper, is suggestive of the more mundane side of popular religious belief in medieval and early modern Japan.

This text is attributed to the chanter Sado Shichidayū and was published, with woodblock illustrations, by Kyūbei of Second Avenue, Kyoto, in the Third Month of 1648. Kyūbei's manuscript is the earliest surviving transcription of a *Shintokumaru* sekkyō performance, and it is believed to preserve the tone and content of the oral sekkyō-bushi style before it came under the heavy influence of the puppet theater. Scholars have often observed that *Shintokumaru* is remarkable for its evocation of the late medieval world of invalids and outcasts—the very people responsible for spreading the tale—and for capturing the hope and desperation of pilgrims at the Tennō-ji temple and other major religious sites. In the scene of Shintokumaru's abandonment, we can actually count the tools of the beggar's trade, and in the Nobuyoshi lord's, the stepmother's, and Otohime's supplications to the Kiyomizu Kannon, we can see the colorful ways in which prayer requests were both made and received. The wandering paths of Shintokumaru in his blindness and Otohime on her solitary search suggest the peripatetic lives of a variety of medieval preacher-entertainers, including picture storytellers (*etoki*), blind biwa-playing priests, storytelling holy men and women (such as *Kōya hijiri* and *Kumano bikuni*), and the performers of the sekkyō-bushi themselves. Like all the works of its genre, *Shintokumaru* displays the melodramatic sensibility of these and other late medieval street entertainers, all of whom made their living by telling outrageous and sentimental tales of the grotesque and the sublime.

Материал, защитен с авторско право

Part I

Now as for the tale I tell, in the Takayasu district of Kawachi Province there was once a wealthy lord by the name of Nobuyoshi.[421] He had erected forty thousand storehouses in the four directions—eighty thousand in the eight—and there was nothing for which he lacked. Nothing, that is, except a child. He was without a son or daughter, and for this he grieved, morning and night. He approached his wife one day and spoke: "Listen, dear—you and I don't have a single child, and the pain of this is more than I can bear. Is there nothing we can do?"

"What a silly thing to say," the wife replied. "It's because the karma from our previous lives is so wretched. But since ancient times, childless couples have visited the gods and buddhas to pray for an heir, and when they do, they're given one, I've heard. Nobuyoshi, you should visit a god or buddha and pray for a child, too." The lord thought this was good advice. "Rather than just any place," he said, "let's visit Kiyomizu Temple in the eastern part of the capital. They say the Kannon there is the best in the three countries."[422]

Traveling with too many can be a burden, Nobuyoshi thought, yet with too few, the roads can be difficult to clear. Thus, to the jingling sound of hawks' bells, dogs' bells, and the horses' bit, the lord and his wife set off for Kiyomizu with one hundred attendants and a parade of palanquins on sturdy shafts. Through what places, now, do you think they passed? Through Uetsuke-nawate, and the Sakura district too; over Hora Pass, and Mount Yawata beyond; trudging and plodding over Little Yodo Bridge, pressing on through Fushimi, and bowing down to pray at Sanjūsangendō, the Hall of Thirty-three Bays: thus they sped upon their way, and in no time at all they reached Kiyomizu Temple in the eastern hills.

The lord and his wife proceeded to Otowa Falls, where they purified themselves by rinsing their mouths and hands.[423] They moved on to the central hall. Standing in the Holy Presence, they rattled the sacred summoning bell and made their earnest request: "Hail most merciful Kannon! If it were wealth we sought, we should indeed incur your wrath. But all we ask is that you give us a child, either a boy or a girl." They settled in at a place near the left of the altar to pass the hours in supplication. Late in the night, the Kiyomizu Kannon—awesome to behold—emerged wavering from his inner sanctum and

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421. Takayasu is now a part of Osaka. Nobuyoshi is identified as a *chōja*, a man of immense material wealth.

422. The three countries are India, China, and Japan. In referring to the Kiyomizu Kannon, Nobuyoshi speaks of the Kiyomizu "principal image" (*honzon*), a wooden statue of the Eleven-Headed Kannon enshrined in the main temple hall.

423. Otowa Falls (Otowa no taki) is the small, spring-fed waterfall from which Kiyomizu-dera (Pure Water Temple) takes its name.

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stood before the dozing Nobuyoshi and his wife. "Dear couple," he spoke, delivering his oracle in a dream, "that you've traveled such a distance to ask of me a child is truly very moving. However, I shall tell you now of the karma from your previous lives.

"As for you, sir, in your previous existence you were a woodsman in the Nose District of Tanba Province. In the spring, thinking that you might like to pluck fresh ferns and bracken, you let loose a terrible fire in the mountains, burning up the bugs that live three feet in the earth. There were many birds in that place, but none so sad as two pheasants, a husband and wife.

"Because it was spring, they had laid twelve eggs, and in this, their time of joy, the raging fire approached. In great distress, the father and mother pheasant carried water in their beaks to dampen the grass around their little ones. Still, the menacing flames crept close. The mother pheasant wrapped her wings around her twelve eggs, and the father, grasping the mother's beak in his own, tried to pull her to safety. Caught in the thorny brush, however, they had little chance to escape. The father pheasant flew to the far riverbank. 'Come! Come! mother pheasant,' he cried. 'As long as we're alive, we'll have more children and raise them anew! Leave our babies and fly!' 'You heartless father!' the mother shouted back. 'I can't bear to leave even one of these twelve eggs behind, much less the entire lot!' and she was consumed by the fire.

"Heartbroken, the father pheasant screeched and flailed his wings, and he pronounced a curse that was most moving to hear: 'Whoever set fire to this field today, he shall surely pay a price! If he's reborn as a stone, then he shall be a paving stone on the Kamakura Highway, trampled by horses as they pass on their way. If, because of some good deed in a former life, he's reborn as a human, then he shall be a wealthy lord. Even the poor have children, but this one—he will have none! He will long for a child in the daytime and long for a child in the night, suffering on in this way until death!' With his beak, the father pheasant ripped the ends of his wings and expired. His dying vow has penetrated your heart, devouring your heirs on the inside, before they can be born. This is why you have no child.

"As for you, madam, in your previous life you were a great snake beneath the China Bridge in Seta in Ōmi Province. Most pitiful of all were the swallows—a husband and wife—who used to fly from the Eternal Land in spring and return in the autumn![424] They had laid twelve eggs on a strut of the bridge; the mother would keep them warm while the father looked for food. All was well until one day they went out together to forage. You saw them go, and thinking it a fine opportunity, you took the nest and ate the babies inside.

"Upon their return, the swallows were desperately alarmed. They searched here and there, but they could find no sign of their young. 'That big river snake

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424. The Eternal Land, Tokiwa no kuni, is a mythical place without change.

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son cord. If this is still not enough, I will scatter on your grounds three *shō*, three *gō* of gold dust, three *shō*, three *gō* of silver dust, and replenish these every month with six *shō*, six *gō* of pure gold and silver dust.[428] I have at home a fine spring steed, just turned six, so if this is still not enough, I will fit him with a gilded saddle and a silver bit and parade him before you again and again to rouse you from your sleep. My one request is for a child, whether a boy or a girl.

Taking up the wife's petition, the abbot read:

If you grant us a child, I will give you seven Chinese mirrors, seven clear mirrors, and seven copper mirrors. With these twenty-one mirrors, I will present to you an eight-foot dangling sash, five feet of hair, and a twelve-compartment handbox of heirlooms. If this is not enough, I will also present to you 108 censers, pestles, bells and crosiers, and one thousand flower trays, all decorated with gold and silver. Your sanctum curtain is old and shabby, so if this is still not enough, I will replace it with seven rills of figured cloth, seven rills of brocade, and seven rills of gold-lace weave. On these twenty-one rills, I will have accomplished artisans embroider scenes of the devas and twenty-five bodhisattvas descended from the heavens to save sentient beings of the Latter Age. I shall have them embroider the light of the sun, moon and stars to rouse you from your sleep. My one request is for a child, whether a boy or a girl.

That night, the marvelous Kannon emerged wavering from his inner sanctum, and standing between the lord and his wife, he spoke to them in a dream: "I had no heir to give you, but because you've taken such a vow, I have obtained one after all. When the child is seven, one of you—the mother or the father—will be in mortal danger. But be unstinting in your love!" "Even if we are to die tomorrow," Nobuyoshi and his wife replied, "please give us a child tonight." "I will, then, and a boy he shall be. Now be gone from this place!" and he vanished without a trace.

Nobuyoshi and his wife awoke with a start. "What a happy revelation!" they exclaimed and took leave of the Holy Presence. Immensely pleased, they set out from Kiyomizu Temple with their many retainers and soon arrived at their mansion in Takayasu in Kawachi. Kannon's promise was indeed true; the wife's monthly malady came to a halt, and after suffering her seventh-month misery and her ninth-month labor, she delivered a child. When her female attendants

428. One *shō* is the equivalent of 1.92 quarts, and one *gō* is one-tenth of a *shō*. According to the nō play *Kan'yōkyū*, the Kan'yō Palace in Qin China was similarly adorned with pearl, lapis lazuli, and gold dust spread about on the ground.

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lifted the baby to see if it was a boy or a girl, they beheld a young master, beautiful like lapis lazuli or a polished gem. Nobuyoshi and his wife were joyous beyond compare.

An old and trusted retainer approached them and spoke: "You will surely give the boy a name. What will you call him?" "He's a gift of the Kiyomizu Kannon," Nobuyoshi replied, "so please think of something appropriate." "He will be wealthy like his father and long-lived like me," the old retainer foretold. Naming him after these two traits—*shin* and *toku*—they called him Shintokumaru.[429] The young master had six wet nurses and six nannies, and together these twelve ladies bathed and doted on him ceaselessly. His second and third years quickly passed, and in what seemed like a day, he was already nine.[430] Nobuyoshi and his wife were endlessly happy.

The lord approached his wife one day and spoke: "Listen, dear—let's send Shintokumaru to Shigino Temple." "That's an excellent idea," the wife replied, and they summoned their retainer, Nakamitsu. "Nakamitsu," the wife said, "we would like you to place Shintokumaru in Shigino Temple for three years. See that he gets a good education." "Yes, ma'am," Nakamitsu replied, and he set off for the temple together with the young master. Since they hurried on their way, they soon arrived and met with the abbot.

"This young master is the son of Lord Nobuyoshi in Takayasu in Kawachi Province," Nakamitsu explained. "I'll entrust him to you for a period of three years." "Fine," the abbot replied. Nakamitsu turned to Shintokumaru: "Study hard. I'll come for you after three years. Farewell," and he returned to Kawachi. Shintokumaru surpassed the other children at the temple. For every character his teachers taught, he learned two; for every ten, he learned a hundred or a thousand. In this way he became the top student at Shigino.

There was at that time a gathering of the richest men of the three provinces of Izumi, Kawachi, and Settsu. "Let's do something splendid," someone proposed. Another person spoke: "Let's have a stone stage set up over the Lotus Pond at Tennō-ji temple on the twenty-second of the Second Month.[431] We'll put flowers all around it and have the acolytes dance." "A perfect suggestion," everyone agreed, and it was decided that this year Lord Nobuyoshi would be in charge.

Nobuyoshi returned home and summoned Nakamitsu. "Go fetch Shintokumaru from Shigino Temple," he commanded. "Yes, sir," Nakamitsu replied,

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429. The explanation of Shintokumaru's name is problematic. The *toku* signifies "virtue" or "prosperity"; the meaning of *shin* is unclear. In the nō play *Yoroboshi*, the boy is called Shuntokumaru.

430. According to the Japanese count, Shintokumaru was "one" at the time of his birth.

431. Shitennō-ji (commonly abbreviated as Tennō-ji), in the Tennō-ji District of Osaka. The twenty-second day of the Second Month is the occasion for a ceremony honoring Shōtoku Taishi, who is reported in *Nihon shoki* to have founded the temple in 593.

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"Well, angels," the Kiyomizu Kannon spoke. "There are many who live in the house of Lord Nobuyoshi in Takayasu in Kawachi. This evening, take from among them the master's wife." Having received their command, the angels flew off in a whirlwind and blew into Nobuyoshi's home. Ignoring the many people there, they took hold of the mistress and began to tear away her spirit. Because she was in the midst of entertaining, she begged leave of the household, withdrew to an inner room, and fell prone, dying, on a rattan pillow.

Shintokumaru and the Nobuyoshi lord knelt at her right and left. "Darling Nobuyoshi," the wife spoke, "I've never minded the breeze before, but now it cuts me to the quick. My bones and joints feel as though they're coming apart. I don't think I can last the night. If I should die, take good care of our one and only Shintoku. And you, Shintokumaru—listen to me now. Your father's still in his prime, and if I die, he'll need a wife. Treat your new mother as you would me, and remember—if you get along with her, it'll make me happy in my grave. If you don't, then even if you read a thousand or ten thousand sutras for me, it won't do a bit of good. And oh, Nakamitsu! If I should die, serve Shintokumaru well. I'm entrusting everything to you. My dear family, my dear husband, and most of all my dear Shintokumaru, keeping me in this world! We were so fortunate to have you . . . and yet the woe of a mother who must go first . . . "

These were her final words. Earth is as earth, the grass is as grass, and in the quieting of a human voice, all is still. The wife vanished like the morning dew. Having watched her slip away, Nobuyoshi clung to her lifeless corpse. "Am I dreaming or awake?" he cried. "Can this parting be real? Come back and stay with us for a while in this wretched world!" Shintokumaru, too, embraced his dead mother. "Is this a dream?" he moaned. "Is it real, this good-bye? I'm still so young . . . who'll take care of me now that you're gone? If you have to go, then take me with you, please!" Roiling and clutching, pressing his face to hers, Shintokumaru shed bitter, anguished tears.

The time soon came for the funeral rites, when it would no longer do to weep and wail. To the chanting of a chorus of priests, the wife was placed in a six-strutted casket and carried to the cremation grounds. Alas, poor Shintokumaru! He followed his mother the entire way, his wretched complaints so moving to hear. "Torn from my mother as a child," he sobbed, "—what'll become of me now?" The bier was piled high with sandalwood and set afire. All things are fleeting in this world, and thus, amid the three flames, the body was consumed.[437] After the smoke had cleared, the bones were collected and the ashes swept together. A tomb was built and a wooden marker raised, and everyone

437. The significance of the "three flames" is unclear. It may be connected to the belief that death extinguishes the three flames of delusion.

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returned home. Poor Shintokumaru! Reading sutras in the Buddha Hall, he felt such sorrow in his heart, such immeasurable pain!

The extended family gathered to discuss various matters. Lord Nobuyoshi was still in his prime, they said, and he would have to have a wife. Among the thirty-six nobles in the capital, Lord Rokujō had a younger daughter who was then eighteen years old. It was decided that she should be his bride. An auspicious day was chosen, and the wedding held without delay. Nobuyoshi received his wife amid much singing and dancing, with infinite joy.

Back in the Buddha Hall, Shintokumaru heard the news. "My coldhearted father," he brooded. "It's hardly been a hundred days since my mother died—what does he mean by getting married? He's so unfeeling. Oh, for my dear, dead mother!" There was nothing he could do but cry. He looked through a great many sutras, but there were none that spoke highly of women. He erected a placard declaring the Buddha Hall off limits to women, and for seven days he read sutras for the benefit of his mother. The sorrow in his heart was beyond compare.

As a sign of her good karma, perhaps, the new wife gave birth to a son. Nobuyoshi named him Little Jirō, and when the wife found out, she was upset.[438] It galled her that he had not been made heir, seeing how fortunate she was to have had a child. She concocted a plan to place a curse on Shintokumaru and have Little Jirō designated as the heir. She approached her husband and spoke: "Darling Nobuyoshi—I'm from the capital, you know, and since I made a request of the Kiyomizu Kannon, I need to visit his temple." "If that's the case," Nobuyoshi replied, "will you go by palanquin or horse?" "Either way, I'm sure to stir up gossip. I'll leave Little Jirō with his nursemaids and go quietly instead." She prepared for her journey and set out from Takayasu with a Buddhist pilgrim.

Through what places now do you think they passed? Through Uetsukenawate and Sakuragauri; over Hora Pass to Fushimi and beyond. Hastening on their way, they soon arrived at Kiyomizu Hill. The wife took lodging, found a blacksmith, and had him make six-inch nails for her in the night. At the break of dawn, she visited Kiyomizu Temple. After rattling the sacred summoning bell, she made an earnest request: "Hail most merciful Kannon! Though my visit here is of no great importance, it has come to my attention that Shintokumaru is your special charge. From today, please make Little Jirō your special charge, too. Also, please take Shintokumaru's life. If you won't, then please cripple him with a repulsive disease." Taking out her nails, she said, "These I will strike into Shintoku's four limbs," and she pounded eighteen of them—the number of the festival day of Kannon—into a living tree in the Holy Presence.[439]

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438. The boy is called Oto no Jirō, literally, "younger-brother second son."

439. The festival day (*ennichi*) of Kannon is the eighteenth day of every month.

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Looking back wistfully, Nakamitsu leads his horse away from the Tennō-ji temple (*foreground*). As Shintokumaru lies abandoned in the Nenbutsu Hall, the Kiyomizu Kannon appears to him in a dream (*upper background*). (By permission of the Tenri Library)

Feeling sorry for his special ward, the Kiyomizu Kannon appeared to Shintokumaru in a dream. "Dear Shintoku," he said, "your disease doesn't spring from within—it comes from someone's curse. Now go out and beg in the streets to sustain your life," and he vanished without a trace.

Shintokumaru awoke. "What a wondrous revelation!" he thought. "If I had spoken badly of my father and taken up begging without falling ill first, then I would certainly have had reason to feel ashamed. But if I beg now, the dishonor would be my father's, for it was he who abandoned me when I was ailing. I'll do as I'm told and beg." Donning his straw hat and raincoat, Shintokumaru begged in the seven settlements around Tennō-ji. The city people stared. "Do you think that beggar wants something to eat?" they asked. "Look at how he staggers! Let's give him a name!" and they called him Yorobōshi, "the staggering priest." The people took care of him for a day or two, but after that, no one did anything.

The Kiyomizu Kannon spoke to Shintokumaru from the sky: "Hello there, Shintokumaru. Your kind of disease can be cured in the Kumano hot springs. Hurry to Kumano and bathe." Having delivered this instruction, he disappeared into the air. "That must have been my guardian deity, the Kiyomizu Kannon," Shintokumaru thought, and he bowed down three times and prayed to the sky. He then set out from Tennō-ji, just as he had been told, inquiring the way to Kumano for a hot-spring cure. And through what places do you think he made his way? Hastening past the hundred acres of Abeno, he asked for the road ahead; bowing down to pray at the four shrines of Sumiyoshi—again asking the way—he soon reached the beach at Sakai. He gazed far into the west at Ishizunawate, his heart filled with sadness at the splashing sounds of the fishermen's

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find my husband!" and she collapsed on a sickbed of love. Otohime's older brother, Tarō, approached his parents and spoke: "Listen, Father. Otohime looks like she'll die from longing. They say that when people part in life, they can still meet again, but when they part in death, they can never. So please, Father and Mother, please let her go."

The mother spoke to Otohime: "If this is how it is," she said, "whether you find him or not, be sure to send us news." She took out some gold coins she had stored away and handed them to her daughter. Otohime hung them around her neck, next to her skin. She prepared to set out on her search but then stopped: she had heard that she was beautiful, so thinking to alter her appearance, she put a simple sleeveless frock on her back and took up a sheaf of temple bills.[441] Having adopted a pilgrim's garb, she ventured out from the Kogi Estate.

She passed through Shimoizumi and Ōtori in Shitachi, and even though she looked for her beloved in the three hamlets of Yamanaka, there was no sign of him at all. She searched at Kawanabe and Ichiba in Kii Province but, again, not a trace. She begged passage in a boat across the Ki River. "Have you come across a crippled acolyte on this sea road?" she asked a passing traveler. "Whether he's your companion or your brother, I'm not going to keep an eye out for him," the person replied. These were cruel, disheartening words. She asked because she had to, and the insensitivity of those who wouldn't help her was hard to bear.

Hastening on in tears, she soon arrived at Fujishiro Pass. She sat down to rest. Someone on his way to Kumano had tried to paint the surrounding scenes, and unable to depict the feelings in his heart, he had cast away his brush, which is why the tree there is called the "Discarded-Brush Pine."[442] But for Otohime, without Shintokumaru, not even this was of interest. "Oh, how I miss my husband!" she cried. "And after all this searching, not a single trace! He must have taken it hard when he heard the ladies laughing, and gone and drowned himself somewhere. He probably thinks I was laughing with them. He must hate me for it!" Overwrought, she decided against visiting Kumano. "I'll return to the Kogi Estate," she thought, "and find him from there, even if it kills me." Thinking to hold memorial services or to join him herself, she plodded back from Fujishiro. But though she searched here and there, she found no sign of her beloved.

If she were to return to her father, Otohime thought, he was unlikely to give her leave again, so passing by her home, she continued on to the Kamigata

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441. Temple bills (*fuda*) are small, personal labels that pilgrims pasted on the gates and pillars of temples and shrines.

442. The painter is said to have been Kose no Kanaoka, founder of the Kose school of painting in the latter half of the ninth century.

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in Yamazaki!" Bowing down to pray at Sekido Hall, pressing on past Autumn Mountain and the Toba Lovers' Tomb,[443] they hurried on their way. In no time at all they arrived at Kiyomizu Temple in the eastern hills.

They proceeded to Otowa Falls and purified themselves there thirty-three times.[444] Later, approaching the Holy Presence, they rattled the sacred summoning bell and made a reverent supplication: "Hail most merciful Kannon! We hear that Shintokumaru is your special ward. Please cure him of this disease!" They passed the evening in prayer. In the dead of night, the Kiyomizu Kannon emerged wavering from his inner sanctum. He stood before Otohime and spoke:

"Dear Otohime—since the distant past, people have called on me to do various things. Shintokumaru's stepmother came and hammered eighteen nails in my Holy Presence—135 nails at shrines and sanctuaries throughout the capital—so don't blame me.[445] When you leave here tomorrow, you'll find a feather duster on the outer temple steps. If you pull Shintokumaru upright and stroke him with it from top to bottom and bottom to top, chanting 'What joy, a cure!' his illness is sure to be overcome." The bodhisattva vanished without a trace.

Otohime jumped up with a start. "What a marvelous dream revelation!" she cried, and she bowed down before the altar three times to pray. Upon taking their leave, they found the feather duster on the outer temple steps. They carried it with them to a simple shack, where Otohime lifted Shintokumaru to his feet. Chanting the invocation, she brushed him with it three times, from top to bottom and bottom to top. One hundred thirty-five nails sprang from Shintokumaru's sores. He was restored to his former self. Overjoyed, Otohime took him in her arms; their delight was truly without measure. Husband and wife, they returned to the Holy Presence and paid obeisance thirty-three times. Finally bidding farewell to the Kiyomizu Kannon, they left to take up temple lodgings.

Back in Kawachi Province, Lord Nobuyoshi had come to a grievous pass. "Abhor another and you yourself shall be abhorred," people say, as half our malice springs back upon ourselves. The stepmother's looks remained unaffected, but not those of Lord Nobuyoshi. To everyone's dismay, his eyes were completely crushed, and even his servants fled as they would. Destitute and forsaken, he found himself unable to stay in Takayasu, and he left to wander in Tanba Province.

Word of these events spread to Izumi Province. Hearing all that had happened, Lord Kageyama approached his son, Tarō, and spoke: "Listen, Tarō. I hear that Shintokumaru's been healed and that he's in the capital. Why don't

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443. The lovers' tomb (*koizuka*) is the grave of Lady Kesa (Kesa *gozen*) in the Toba District (now Fushimi-ku) of Kyoto.

444. Thirty-three times for the thirty-three manifestations of Kannon.

445. According to part II, the stepmother hammered 136 nails.

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